

[My Interview with GB News on legal migration](#)

Please find below the link to my Interview with GB News' Martin Daubney where we discuss the need to reduce legal migration.

You can find it between between: 12:12-17:20.

[More money for social care](#)

I held a meeting with the local government Minister to press the case for more money for social care in Wokingham. I have received a letter today from Michael Gove to MPs confirming there will be an extra allocation of cash for social care for 2024-5 on top of the general settlement indications. I look forward to receiving the final details of Wokingham's share of the increased spending pot.

[Plenty of headroom for tax cuts](#)

I was critical of OBR accounting for inflation linked linked government debt. They said the extra repayment costs on index linked bonds from higher inflation were like monthly cash payments though the government does not send the bondholders cash each time prices go up. . Now I can enjoy the reverse process where the accounting system to correct the figures going forward will record big drops in the costs of government interest payments as inflation falls away. In the year to November 2023 the OBR charged the government accounts £50bn with inflation top ups to bonds that do not become liable until the bonds are due for repayment. This year beginning with December 2023 with inflation down from 10% to 4% the debt interest figure will tumble. It went below zero in December for the inflation adjustments.

It looks as if on their accounting system government interest charges and spending will benefit from a fall of more than £30bn in the year ahead, assuming inflation now falls from 4% to 2% as forecast by the Bank of England. Tax revenues are predictably disappointing a bit compared to OBR forecasts as the higher rates and frozen thresholds bite. The Treasury/OBR model still attributes too much revenue growth with tax rises and fails to credit tax rate cuts with more revenue yet this often happens with the main

capital and income taxes.

We need a growth strategy which must include tax cuts. We now know there will be more than £30 bn extra headroom as the interest payments plunge. The government should cut energy taxes as a priority. Getting inflation down more quickly would mean even bigger falls in debt interest and curb inflationary increases in public spending across all the budgets. Cuts in taxes on small business and the self employed will boost output and competition. Income tax should also be brought down by taking more people out of the higher tax brackets they are being dragged into.

[Report on Immigration – with credit to FACTS4EU](#)

Please find below the links to a recent report published by FACTS4EU on Mass Immigration which I have contributed to.

Facts4EU Report: https://facts4eu.org/news/2024_jan_mass_immigration

Facts4EU Twitter: <https://x.com/Facts4eu0rg/status/1749691717849137158?s=20>

Facts4EU Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Facts4EU/posts/pfbid0v04Ar1ofCcUAz7cZ4nqetZyALgBYvs9fiNiHWckhi2JgXPaztTBzaxJP45YR8ngRl>

[Great British Rail Sale 2](#)

Please see below the letter I have received from the Minister concerning rail ticket sales.

Dear Colleague

Great British Rail Sale 2

On Tuesday 23 January we are launching the second Great British Rail Sale, following the success of the last sale in 2022, offering over a million rail tickets for passengers across Britain at up to 50 per cent off. Passengers can buy tickets between 23 to 29 January for travel from 30 January to 15 March.

The rail sale will offer passengers significant savings on journeys across

England and Wales, as well as on journeys between England and Scotland – allowing people to visit different places, connect with friends and loved ones, and get out and about around the country.

The last sale in 2022 previously saw over 1.3 million tickets sold, saving around £7 million for passengers, according to industry estimates.

It was also great news for the railway too. Industry estimates suggest the sale generated over £3 million in additional revenue and helped bring passengers back to rail. The Great British Rail Sale is just one part of how we're improving the passenger experience, encouraging better value fares and helping to grow revenue on the railways.

As you'll also be aware, ASLEF have recently called rolling strikes between 30th Jan and 5th Feb, with each operator striking for one day, coinciding with the first week of travel dates for the sale. Additionally, LNER drivers will strike the whole working week between the 5th and 9th of February. Operators will not offer sale tickets on strike days, including any additional dates should they be announced by ASLEF. However, with the travel window extending to the 15th March, there will be plenty of opportunity for your constituents to take advantage of discounts. It's very disappointing to see ASLEF continuing to target those who travel to work, school or important medical appointments by train.

ASLEF is now the only rail union that is continuing to strike while refusing to put a fair and reasonable offer to its members. The offer that remains on the table would bring the average train driver's salary up to £65,000.

The ASLEF leadership should do the right thing and let their members decide their own future, instead of deciding it for them. The Government has also made it clear to train operators that they should be ready to use the Minimum Service Levels regulations, a tool the Government has provided to reduce the impact of rail strikes on passengers.

The discount will be available on selected Advance or Off peak tickets from participating train companies. Your constituents can find tickets and more information by visiting: www.nationalrail.co.uk/railsale.

Yours ever,

HUW MERRIMAN MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT