

Update on leadership election

I have now heard from members of the Wokingham Conservatives about the leadership by email and through my meeting on Friday with members at a party reception. I will continue to consult.

I will now rule out voting for those candidates who want to delay our exit, and who have unrealistic plans to re open the Withdrawal Agreement and renegotiate bits of it, when the EU has said they will not do so.

I have heard enough to know Mr Stewart's positions do not offer us a way forward that is likely to work. He was one of the three foremost advocates of the Withdrawal Agreement which went down to the most spectacular defeat the Conservative party has ever experienced in the Euro elections, when it was the only proposition the official Conservative machine put forward. The failure with Mrs May to sell it to more than 90% of the public should rule him out as a future leader of the party. His stubborn belief that a variant of the Agreement has to go ahead shows he is completely out of touch with the electorate.

This Agreement is toxic, hated by both Leave and Remain voters. The Cabinet made a mighty mistake in going along with it, with some Cabinet members trying trying the hard sell on it for weeks on end long after it was clear the public did not want it.