

# We deserve to hear the truth behind Theresa May's Brexit talks

This time last year I was campaigning hard for Britain to remain in the EU. Twelve months on, and not only have we been through a referendum when voters chose to leave the EU, we have a different Prime Minister who is now hanging on to her job by a thread.

It has been an extraordinary period of upheaval in British politics.

This week, the Brexit talks got under way but we still have no idea what the final outcome will be.

Theresa May was intent on a hard Brexit, yet her authority has been crushed after a general election which saw her lose her majority. Her vision of an extreme Brexit has been rejected.

Jeremy Corbyn is assembling a government in waiting at Westminster, and the formidable Keir Starmer is leading our constructive approach to Brexit.

He has made clear to the Prime Minister that she must take a different tone and approach, and be much clearer about the benefits of the single market and the customs union. And she has to be clear about how she's going to allow Parliament to have a much greater role in scrutiny as we go through the process of leaving the EU.

Alternatively, she could step aside and let Labour guide us through the process instead.

We want to scrap the Conservatives' Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis on retaining the benefits of the single market and the customs union – which are essential for maintaining industries, jobs and businesses in Britain.

Labour will always put jobs and the economy first.

The outcome of the Brexit talks will have major ramifications for Scotland. Nicola Sturgeon is quietly hoping it is a disaster – anything to build up a fresh grievance for her campaign for independence. She doesn't care much about getting a good deal.

The UK Government should be transparent and open as talks get under way, and that includes involving opposition politicians and devolved administrations.

The Welsh Labour Government are committed to making the process work for the entire UK, unlike Sturgeon. That's why she must first publicly remove a second independence referendum from the table.

The outcome of Brexit should not be used by the SNP to demand a second vote. Even Sturgeon must see that it makes no sense to ask to join the UK

negotiating team at the same time as calling for a vote to leave the UK.

As there are demands for a cross-party Brexit team, similarly the First Minister should meet with opposition parties prior to each negotiation meeting to ensure she presents the broad view of the Scottish Parliament, not just of the SNP.

And she should report back to other parties and to Parliament about how she's got on. What she claims other people said can no longer be trusted, so the negotiations must be open, transparent and properly recorded so we can see the whole picture.

We are embarking on a pivotal moment in our country's history. My fear is that May and Sturgeon are not up to the job.

This article first appeared in Kezia Dugdale's Daily Record column on Tuesday 20 June 2017