

What should the government do now?

It is difficult to know if the interim government will feel it can do things. Constitutionally of course it can, as it is still formed from the same Conservative majority from the General election of 2019. It still has the same Prime Minister who won that election. Yet some around the table may think they should mark time pending a new decision about direction to be made in the forthcoming leadership election. What is clearly true is there will not be the same uniformity of view and collective responsibility as usual, as several in the Cabinet will be campaigning to be Leader and will wish to differentiate their views from the current line.

I would urge them to be liberated generally. They should try to get agreement to necessary courses of action that cannot easily wait until October and the formation of new government. Here are some of priorities they should press on with or adopt:

1. Intensify the campaign to get more people into work all the time there are so many jobs on offer, as there are still too many people on benefits who could improve their finances by taking work.
2. Put in place all that is necessary to cut the government overhead under the plans identified but not yet implemented fully by Jacob Rees Mogg.
3. Press on rapidly with the Northern Ireland protocol Bill. We need to be free to set our own VAT rates for the whole UK as soon as possible, and to restore GB/NI trade.
4. Produce a better package to tackle the cost of living crisis. Suspend VAT on domestic fuel, and halve VAT on petrol and diesel immediately. Remove the National Insurance rise. Lift the threat of higher business taxes next year, to show the world the UK is open for business and welcomes more investment.
5. Strengthen legislation to take full control of our borders.
6. Amend the Levelling Up Bill to allow local communities to set the amount of new housing in their local plan.