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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

Wednesday 27 March 2019

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The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

The Secretary of State was asked—

Government Policies: Implications for Scottish Economy

1. **Stephen Kerr** (Stirling) (Con): What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the implications of the Government's policies for the Scottish economy. [909972]

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has regular discussions with fellow Cabinet Ministers regarding all matters that are of importance to Scotland.

Stephen Kerr: Does my right hon. Friend agree that direct engagement by UK Government Departments, such as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Treasury, in growth deals such as the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city region deal is the best way to ensure that all economic objectives are met?

Mel Stride: May I reassure my hon. Friend that discussions are held right across Whitehall Departments, including those to which he refers, to ensure that the city deal projects, including the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city deal, are as successful as possible? I also recognise the extraordinary amount of work, effort and drive that he has personally put into helping ensure that they are a success.

Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab): The Secretary of State and I had a conversation in the Tea Room on Monday, but given that he is not answering this question I will have to ask about something else. Brexit is obviously the biggest issue with regard to the impact on the Scottish economy, so can the Financial Secretary tell us how much the Scottish economy will shrink by if the Prime Minister's deal is passed in this House?

Mel Stride: The cross-Government analysis that we have already come forward with shows, as the hon. Gentleman will know, that, on the basis that we are leaving the European Union, by far the best outcome is to support the Prime Minister's deal.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): Under the Conservative Government, the Scottish budget has been cut by £2.6 billion in real terms over 10 years, and yet the confidence and supply deal with the Democratic Unionist party means that the Barnett formula has been broken to the tune of £3.4 billion. When is Scotland going to get that money?

Mel Stride: The Barnett formula has been honoured. As the hon. Gentleman will know, there are Barnett consequentialia where moneys are allocated to devolved matters within England. That is not the case in the recent additional amounts to support the Northern Ireland budget. It is also the case that in the recent autumn Budget the Chancellor announced changes that resulted in an additional £950 million for the Scottish Government.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): The economy of rural Scotland would suffer serious damage if the Government's proposals for tariffs on foodstuff were ever to be implemented. The National Farmers Union of Scotland has called for that to be rethought. Are the Government listening to it?

Mel Stride: The Government are most certainly listening to all those who have concerns about the introduction of tariffs where they are not in existence, as is currently the case between ourselves and the EU27. Once again, that is why the deal that is before the House, which has been negotiated with the European Union, is so important—because that would mean that we would not run into those particular difficulties.

Lesley Laird (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (Lab): This question is specifically to the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Secretary of State for Scotland has three responsibilities: strengthening and sustaining the Union; acting as Scotland's voice in Whitehall; and championing the UK Government in Scotland. Which one does he think he is doing best, and why?

Mel Stride: I have no hesitation in answering on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, bound as I am to do so, given that I started this series of questions and convention dictates that I have to reply on his behalf. Those are all absolute priorities for my right hon. Friend, and he will continue to speak up for the people of Scotland.

Lesley Laird: I have to express the Opposition's disappointment that the Secretary of State for Scotland is repeatedly not standing up and being accountable. Once again, this question is directly to the Secretary of State for Scotland, because it is he who holds the office, not the right hon. Gentleman sitting next to him.

I am afraid that I have to tell the Secretary of State that I disagree with the previous response. His record is abysmal. He has failed on the stronger towns fund; failed on Brexit funding for Scotland's businesses; failed to stand up for Scotland's shipbuilding communities through his non-action on the fleet solid support ships contract; and failed to respect the devolution settlement. He has even failed to follow through on his own resignation threats. Secretary of State, how bad does it need to get for the people of Scotland under this Tory Government before you do the right thing and actually resign?

Mel Stride: I categorically do not accept the points the hon. Lady makes. My right hon. Friend does indeed stand up for Scotland, which is partly why—*[Interruption.]* The reason why he is not at the Dispatch Box, as the hon. Lady well knows, is to do with the way in which the conventions of the House operate in respect of the answering of questions. She knows that and it is a little unfair of her, if I may say, Mr Speaker, to try to make political capital out of that particular procedural element. My right hon. Friend has stood up for Scotland to the extent that there was £950 million additional budget for Scotland as a consequence of the last autumn Budget, with £1.3 billion going into city growth deals across Scotland. That is to support Scotland, the economy and the Scottish people.

Leaving the EU: Public Services

2. **Jo Swinson** (East Dunbartonshire) (LD): What discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on the potential effect on public services in Scotland of the UK leaving the EU. [909973]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (David Mundell): I have regular discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union. The best way to ensure that public services in Scotland and across the rest of the UK are protected is to ensure that we leave the EU with a deal.

Jo Swinson: May I share with the Secretary of State an email from one of my constituents, Ian? He says:

“As a doctor, I have already seen the adverse impact of Brexit on the NHS. Staff shortages are already hurting us...We cannot have Brexit and give the NHS resources it so badly needs. I know which people in our local community would prefer.”

Which does the Secretary of State think the people of Scotland would prefer: a decently funded NHS or Brexit?

David Mundell: I think everybody in Scotland wants to see a decently funded and supported NHS. I disagree with the hon. Lady on Brexit—her position is well known. If we want to encourage doctors like Ian to come to Scotland, what we should not be doing is taxing them £1,900 more than they would pay in the rest of the UK.

Tom Pursglove (Corby) (Con): Is it not the case that what we have just heard is a complete scare story? The Government are making millions more extra available for the health service and all EU nationals who are currently here are welcome to stay. Surely, in the future, we will be able to have an immigration system that treats people equally regardless of where they come from in the world?

David Mundell: I agree with the points my hon. Friend makes. In the future, we have to make Scotland an attractive place to come to. If we want doctors and senior health service professionals to come to Scotland, we should not be taxing them significantly more than they would be paying in other parts of the UK.

Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): The number of EU nurses applying to work in the UK has fallen by 87%, and more than 7,000 nurses and midwives from the European economic area have left

the UK since the EU referendum. Can the Secretary of State say, with any honesty, that his Government's pursuit of Brexit, and their hostile immigration policy, has not seriously harmed the NHS?

David Mundell: I could absolutely say that, because the Government are committed, as they have demonstrated across the UK for which they are responsible, to the additional funding of the NHS. We have set out an immigration White Paper, a route for engagement, to ensure that going forward we have EU and other citizens in our country to support the NHS and other services.

Mr Paul Sweeney (Glasgow North East) (Lab/Co-op): It is nice to get a chance to actually shadow the Secretary of State, instead of myriad other Departments that turn up from week to week, particularly as his own Government analysis shows that their plan for Brexit will result in a 4% drop in gross domestic product. If his party's track record tells us anything, it will choose to impose austerity and poverty pay on public services and workers to make up for that decline. One of the worst consequences of austerity is rising food insecurity, resulting in food bank use rising faster in Scotland than across the rest of the UK. Given the pressure that the failed austerity agenda is putting on our public services, will the Secretary of State say how many food banks are currently operational in Scotland and does he predict that the number will go up or down under the current policies of this Government?

David Mundell: I thought the hon. Gentleman might have begun with an apology for his shameful remarks, when he said that people who did not agree with him in the Labour party leaving was “necessary cleansing”. I do not know if Labour Members are aware of those comments, but I believe that they are truly shameful. Of course, in relation to food banks, everybody regrets the need that people have in emergency situations to use food banks, but we are clear that the support that we are providing to people as we leave the EU will be sufficient to meet their needs.

Leaving the EU: Discussions with Scottish Government

3. **Pete Wishart** (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909974]

4. **Peter Grant** (Glenrothes) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909975]

6. **Kirsty Blackman** (Aberdeen North) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909977]

8. **Dr Philippa Whitford** (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909979]

9. **Patrick Grady** (Glasgow North) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909980]

15. **Drew Hendry** (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the UK leaving the EU. [909986]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (David Mundell): I recently chaired the joint Scottish Business Growth Group and regularly meet the Scottish Government in a number of other forums, including the Joint Ministerial Committee, to discuss a range of matters related to EU exit.

Pete Wishart: I am sure that the Scottish people will be comforted by that fact. I am pretty certain that the Secretary of State has been able to have a look at the petition to revoke article 50. If he has not, I can tell him that nearly 10% of his constituents have now signed it. The Scottish people just want this chaotic Tory Brexit gone, but with the UK options quickly diminishing for Scotland to remain, surely he agrees that at some point, the Scottish people will have to decide whether they want to go down with this disastrous, isolating, ugly Brexit Britain or whether they should determine their own way in Europe as an independent nation.

David Mundell: I became aware that the hon. Gentleman did not support the First Minister's policy of a people's vote when I did not see any pictures of him cuddling Alastair Campbell at the weekend. At least the hon. Gentleman is honest—he wants to revoke article 50. I do not agree with him. That would not implement the outcome of the referendum. The best way for Scotland and the UK to proceed is to leave the EU with the Prime Minister's deal.

Peter Grant: We know that the Prime Minister, yet again, has had private discussions with the leader of the Democratic Unionist party, who is not a Member of this House and does not represent any Government. She represents only a minority view within one nation of these islands. When did the Prime Minister last speak to the First Ministers of Scotland or Wales? What has the Secretary of State done to ensure that such important discussions take place between now and 12 April?

David Mundell: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman is not aware that the First Minister of Scotland was invited to join a Cabinet committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, to discuss Brexit preparedness, as was the First Minister of Wales. Surprisingly, the First Minister of Wales has attended and the First Minister of Scotland never has.

Kirsty Blackman: I am surprised to hear the Secretary of State suggest that the best future for the people of Scotland is to leave the EU, because the UK Government's modelling shows that any Brexit will mean that the people of Scotland are worse off as a result. Will he now do his job, stand up for the people of Scotland and vote against any Brexit?

David Mundell: I am presuming that the hon. Lady is part of the "Remain elite" that Alex Neil MSP and Jim Sillars referred to in their letter to the *Scottish Daily Mail*, when they encouraged all Scottish National party MPs in this House to back the Prime Minister's deal as the best way forward for Scotland. They should listen to them.

Dr Philippa Whitford: Almost all future population growth in Scotland is predicted to come from inward migration, so a welcoming immigration policy and freedom

of movement are critical for our public services and our rural communities. What discussions has the Secretary of State had with the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary about meeting Scotland's needs or devolving the power so that we can do it ourselves?

David Mundell: I was going to answer that I had regularly raised the issue at Cabinet, until the hon. Lady raised the last bit about devolving powers. I have been very clear at this Dispatch Box that the Government, in line with the Smith commission, does not support the devolving of immigration.

Patrick Grady: Sixty-two per cent. of people in Scotland voted to remain, so that is an elite that I am pretty happy to be part of. Some 7,500 of his constituents and 14,500 of mine have signed the petition to revoke article 50. The right hon. Gentleman is supposed to be the Secretary of State for Scotland and Scotland is against Brexit, so when is he going to do his job, stand up for Scotland and stand up to the Prime Minister, and stop Scotland being taken out of the European Union against its will?

David Mundell: Clearly the hon. Gentleman's view is not shared by Alex Neil MSP and former deputy leader of the SNP, Jim Sillars, who I know commands great respect in Glasgow. The issue at the heart of the hon. Gentleman's question is an unwillingness to accept the outcome of the 2014 referendum. We had a United Kingdom referendum, and the United Kingdom as a whole voted to leave the EU.

Drew Hendry: Will the Secretary of State join me in commending the hon. Member for Watford (Richard Harrington) not only for threatening to resign over this Government's ruinous Brexit policy, but for actually having the courage, honour and conviction to follow through, or is that an alien concept to this Secretary of State?

David Mundell: As we see repeatedly from SNP Members, they want a chaotic Brexit—and the chaos and disruption that no deal or no agreement would bring—because they believe that chaos and disruption are the best ways to advance their independence referendum agenda.

Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con): I am aware that the UK Government have provided the Scottish Government with millions of pounds for Brexit preparations. In the rest of the UK, that money has gone to local authorities. Can the Secretary of State tell me how much of that funding the SNP Scottish Government have given to Moray Council or any other council in Scotland?

David Mundell: I am sure the whole House will join me in congratulating my hon. Friend and his wife Krystle on the birth of their son, Alistair, and on using the proxy voting system to reflect his views throughout his paternity leave.

The House might not be aware but the UK Government have provided nearly £100 million to the Scottish Government for Brexit preparations, but, at the weekend, the First Minister of Scotland was unable to identify a single penny that had been paid directly to Scottish local authorities.

Martin Whitfield (East Lothian) (Lab): Could the Secretary of State assist the people of Scotland by indicating how he intends to vote this afternoon?

David Mundell: I am awaiting your decision, Mr Speaker, on which motions will be selected this afternoon.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con): From my right hon. Friend's discussions with the Scottish Government, can he tell us what preparations they have made for a smooth exit from the EU and to take advantage of the benefits that will apply to Scotland?

David Mundell: I would commend the Scottish Government for their actions in relation to preparing for a no-deal outcome in the imminent future—that these preparations were being made was acknowledged by Mike Russell, their own Minister, in a TV interview at the weekend. The Governments are capable of working on that basis. That said, in response to the point of my hon. Friend's question, no, the Scottish Government have not embraced Brexit or the opportunities it could bring to Scotland.

Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP): Twice the elected representatives of the British people have rejected the Government's withdrawal agreement, and today we move on to consider alternatives. I know that the Secretary of State is conflicted on this matter, but I would like to give him an opportunity to be clear with the people of Scotland. Will he still rule out a no-deal Brexit, and if the only way to achieve that is by revoking article 50, will he support that?

David Mundell: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's analysis. I do not support a no-deal Brexit, but I do not support revoking article 50 either.

Tommy Sheppard: We can only interpret that to mean that there are circumstances in which the Secretary of State for Scotland would consent to a no-deal Brexit. In doing so, he stands against the views of the national Parliament of Scotland, of Scottish civil society and of the overwhelming majority of the Scottish people. Is it not time now to rename his post "Secretary of State against Scotland"?

David Mundell: I am sure that that line sounded better when the hon. Gentleman practised it in front of the mirror. He clearly misconstrued my response. The House has made very clear that it will not accept a no-deal Brexit, but we are committed to ensuring that we deliver on the referendum result. That means leaving with a deal, and that is why I continue to support the Prime Minister's deal.

Borderlands Growth Deal

5. **John Lamont** (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con): What steps he is taking to deliver the borderlands growth deal. [909976]

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride): In his spring statement, the Chancellor announced the provision of up to £260 million for the borderlands growth deal, which will take the total investment to £345 million.

John Lamont: Extending the borders railway to Hawick, Newcastleton and on to Carlisle would bring economic prosperity and jobs to the Scottish borders and the wider borderlands area. Will the Minister join me in asking for some of that £260 million to be spent on a feasibility study?

Mel Stride: I can certainly confirm that the Department for Transport will be considering a feasibility study on the extension of the borders railway.

Hugh Gaffney (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (Lab): Has the Minister looked at anything to do with local transport in Scotland? Has he looked at the shambles of ScotRail, and the shambles of local communities that have been left isolated?

Mel Stride: We are totally committed to supporting infrastructure in Scotland. That is why we have announced £1.3 billion to support eight city growth deals that will promote economic growth, prosperity and jobs in Scotland.

10. [909981] **Luke Graham** (Ochil and South Perthshire) (Con): Perth city centre is just outside my constituency, but it is nevertheless a cultural and commercial hub for many of my constituents. Is my right hon. Friend considering further funding applications for the city centre and the rural areas of Perth and Kinross?

Mel Stride: Regeneration is of course a devolved matter, but I can assure my hon. Friend that the Government will be supporting Perth via a £150 million commitment to the Tay cities deal.

Elite-level Professional Tennis

7. **Toby Perkins** (Chesterfield) (Lab): What information his Department holds on the amount of elite-level professional tennis that will be played in Scotland in 2019. [909978]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (David Mundell): I know that you, Mr Speaker, take a particular interest in this question.

Although my office does not routinely hold information on this matter, I acknowledge the great opportunity to build on the continuing legacy of Andy and Jamie Murray to develop tennis throughout Scotland.

Toby Perkins: If Scottish Office Ministers invested in access to the internet, they would discover that there are no elite-level events in Scotland, which is why many people feel that the Lawn Tennis Association is failing to take the opportunity to build on the legacy of Andy Murray's success. Will the Secretary of State meet representatives of the LTA and the Scottish Government to see what more can be done to ensure that this huge opportunity is not missed once and for all?

David Mundell: I should be happy to give that undertaking. Perhaps you will join us, Mr Speaker, given your passion for tennis and your attendance at major events in Scotland.

Mr Speaker: I entirely agree with the Secretary of State. We all commend the heroic successes of Andy and Jamie Murray and want to build on them this year

and beyond. I think that we should also acknowledge and salute the extraordinary efforts of Judy Murray, one of the greatest women in the world of tennis.

Paul Masterton (East Renfrewshire) (Con): Of course Scotland's reputation in elite tennis extends beyond the Murray brothers to the likes of Gordon Reid, Jonny O'Mara and the late and much missed Elena Baltacha. Will my right hon. Friend join me in calling on the Lawn Tennis Association to provide the money that will enable Tennis Scotland to take advantage of this golden opportunity to ensure that children, no matter where they live in Scotland, can take part in and enjoy the benefits of tennis?

David Mundell: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend, and I will do that. Perhaps he would like to join me, along with the hon. Member for Chesterfield (Toby Perkins) and you, Mr Speaker, at the meeting with the LTA and other interested parties.

Spring Statement: Block Grant

11. **John Stevenson** (Carlisle) (Con): What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the effect of the spring statement on the Scottish Government's block grant. [909982]

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride): The spring statement builds on the autumn budget, which resulted in an extra £950 million for the Scottish budget, and also at the spring statement my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced a further £260 million commitment to the borderlands growth deal.

John Stevenson: Scotland clearly receives a very fair share of funding, but the Scottish Government have decided to increase taxes. Does the Minister agree that becoming the highest taxed part of the United Kingdom risks undermining Scotland, particularly through investment and in its wider economy?

Mel Stride: Substantial tax powers have been devolved to the Scottish Government, including those relating to the rates of income tax, but the UK Government are committed to bringing taxation down, first and foremost by increasing the personal allowance to £12,500 one year earlier than our manifesto commitment and reducing tax in total for over 32 million people throughout the UK.

Mr Speaker: I hope colleagues across the House will want to join me in extending a warm welcome today to the United States Ambassador to the Court of St James's, Woody Johnson. Woody, welcome, it is a pleasure to have you here.

PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister was asked— Engagements

Q1. [910057] **Stewart Hosie** (Dundee East) (SNP): If she will list her official engagements for Wednesday 27 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May): Mr Speaker, I join you in welcoming the United States ambassador to see our deliberations today in Prime Minister's questions.

I recently announced at Prime Minister's questions that I would be chairing a serious violence summit, and I can inform the House that this will take place next Monday. The summit will bring together Ministers, community leaders, agencies and experts to explore what more we can do as a whole society to tackle the root causes of serious violence, as well as intervening with those most at risk. Following the initial summit, Cabinet Ministers will be hosting a series of roundtable discussions with national leaders and those on the frontline. This will complement the recent announcement of a £100 million violence reduction fund targeted at hotspot areas, along with the £200 million youth endowment fund being established this week.

This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today.

Stewart Hosie: I wish the Prime Minister well with the serious violence discussions she is having. However, Brexit is already costing the UK around £1 billion a week in lost growth, and we know that 80%-plus of the public are unhappy with the way in which this has been handled. This is not the fault of Guy Verhofstadt, Michel Barnier, Donald Tusk or any MP in this House voting according to their conscience; that fault lies with the Prime Minister, who is the architect of the withdrawal deal. So can she finally concede to the House that she is liable, responsible, culpable for the chaos that is the Brexit debacle and say when she will be resigning?

The Prime Minister: The Brexit deal delivers on the result of the referendum. The hon. Gentleman has a different view from me: I know he does not want to deliver on the result of the referendum. He wants to try and keep the United Kingdom in the European Union; 17.4 million people voted to take us out of the European Union and that is what we are going to do.

Q2. [910058] **Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): North West Leicestershire voted overwhelmingly to leave the European Union and for the past two years the Prime Minister has told my constituents on over 100 occasions that we will be leaving on 29 March 2019 with or without a withdrawal agreement. At the last minute, she begs our EU masters for an extension to article 50, delaying our departure. Does my right hon. Friend realise that the good people of North West Leicestershire will forgive her for this? They are good people, but they are not stupid people, and they will never trust the Prime Minister again.

The Prime Minister: I hope the message my hon. Friend takes back to his constituents is a very simple one: we can indeed guarantee delivering on Brexit; we can guarantee delivering on Brexit if this week he and others in this House support the deal.

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): This chaotic and incompetent Government have driven our country into chaos. We know the scale of the crisis when the TUC and the CBI are united in writing to the Prime Minister saying:

"A Plan B must be found—one that protects workers, the economy and an open Irish border".

My question on Monday went unanswered, so will the Prime Minister now say what is her plan B?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, we are continuing to work to ensure that we can deliver Brexit for the British people and guarantee that we deliver Brexit for the British people. We have a deal that cancels our EU membership fee, stops the EU making our laws, gives us our own immigration policy, ends the common agricultural policy for good and ends the common fisheries policy for good. Other options do not do that. Other options would lead to delay and uncertainty, and risk never delivering Brexit.

Jeremy Corbyn: The only problem with the Prime Minister's answer is that her deal has been twice defeated in this House, in one case by the largest ever majority by which a Government have lost a vote in our recorded parliamentary history. Reports today suggest that a former Conservative Prime Minister is telling Conservative MPs that pursuing a customs union with the EU is the best way to get Brexit over the line. Does she agree with him, and will she be supporting any motions for a customs union this afternoon?

The Prime Minister: The Government's deal that we have negotiated with the European Union delivers the benefits of a customs union, while enabling us to have an independent free trade policy and to negotiate free trade agreements in our interests and not rely on Brussels to negotiate them for us. The right hon. Gentleman used to stand up for an independent trade policy; now he wants to have a customs union and to throw away the idea of an independent trade policy and leave Brussels negotiating for us. We want to negotiate our trade in our interests and the interests of people across this country.

Jeremy Corbyn: The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that our policy is for a customs union to protect jobs and society. She will also know that the TUC and the CBI have called for a customs union as part of a deal. In fact, the letter they wrote to all MPs yesterday said that

"a deal that delivers a customs union and strong alignment with the UK and the EU rules is the preferred outcome for the business community".

It is a bit strange when a Conservative Prime Minister says she does not want what the business community wants. These are indeed strange times. Can she say why she will not include a customs union in the options that will be discussed today?

The Prime Minister: May I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he does not just read the question that he had thought of previously but listens to the answer that I gave to his previous question? I will repeat it. He stood on a platform to enable us to do independent trade deals and have an independent trade policy and to deliver Brexit. His policy on a customs union breaks the first promise. He has never explained why he wants to abandon an independent trade policy, and his policy on a second referendum breaks his second promise. Whatever happened to straight-talking honest politics?

Jeremy Corbyn: The Prime Minister does not seem to realise that she does not have a deal that has been supported by this House. Our proposals for a customs union give us alignment on workers' rights, consumer standards and environmental protections; they do not begin with a race to the bottom, which is what she

and many of her Front Benchers actually want. Earlier this week, the Business Minister resigned from the Government saying that the Government's approach to Brexit was

"playing roulette with the lives and livelihoods of the vast majority of people in this country".

Why is she prepared to carry on risking jobs and industry in another attempt to yet again run down the clock and try to blackmail the MPs behind her into supporting a deal that has already been twice rejected?

The Prime Minister: We have been negotiating to protect jobs. What the right hon. Gentleman says about a race to the bottom is wrong, as he well knows. We have been working across this House and it is absolutely clear in the political declaration that we agree to not falling back on workers' rights. Also, we are the Government who have enhanced workers' rights—[*Interruption.*] This is the problem. The Labour party can never stand it when they are told that Conservatives have stood up for workers, but that is what the Conservative party does. We have enhanced workers' rights. We stand up for workers with our tax cuts and our national minimum wage and with higher employment.

Jeremy Corbyn: In answer to a straight question to the Prime Minister, she was unable to guarantee what is called dynamic alignment with European standards. She knows full well that Labour's proposals are to use EU standards as a baseline from which we would improve them, including giving workers full rights at work from day one of their employment, ending zero-hours contracts and many other things.

In the former Business Minister's resignation letter, he also said to the Prime Minister that he hoped that she would

"now act in the national interest and enable Parliament this week to find a consensus... negotiating position".

If today or on Monday a consensus alternative plan emerges across the House, will the Prime Minister accept that decision of the House and accept it as the basis for the UK's negotiating position with the EU henceforth?

The Prime Minister: The objective that we should all have is being able to guarantee delivering Brexit to the British people. The right hon. Gentleman stands there and raises workers' rights. We have been very clear about non-regression on workers' rights and environmental standards—[*Interruption.*] He shakes his head, but it is in black and white in the political declaration that has been agreed. He ends his question—[*Interruption.*] The shadow International Trade Secretary is shouting from a sedentary position about listening to Parliament. What we are going to do on workers' right is say that, no, we will not simply automatically accept what the European Union does; we will listen to Parliament and give Parliament a say in that. I thought the Leader of the Opposition wanted Parliament to have a say in these things.

Jeremy Corbyn: That sounds awfully like a recipe for regression away from those standards and for damaging workers' rights.

After the two largest defeats in parliamentary history, surely the Prime Minister should be listening to Parliament. She did not answer my question about whether an agreement reached in this House would become the Government's negotiating position. I think that the House and, perhaps more importantly, the whole country deserves to know the answer to that question.

This country is on hold while the Government are in complete paralysis. The vital issues facing our country, from the devastation of public services to homelessness and knife crime, have been neglected. The Prime Minister is failing to deliver Brexit because she cannot build a consensus and is unable to compromise and reunite the country. Instead, she is stoking further division and is unable to resolve the central issues facing Britain today. She is, frankly, unable to govern. The Prime Minister faces a clear choice—the one endorsed by the country and many in her party—which is either to listen and change course or to go. Which is it to be?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman asks about the indicative votes tonight, but I actually answered that question in this House earlier this week. He might want to talk to his shadow Brexit Secretary, who made it clear that the Labour party will not commit to supporting the result of any of the indicative votes tonight. The Leader of the Opposition then talks about what is happening in this country, so let us just look at what is going to happen in this country next week: nearly £1 billion extra for the police, £1.4 billion more for local councils, £1.1 billion extra for our schools, another fuel duty freeze, another rise in the national living wage and another tax cut. That is happening under the Conservatives. What would Labour give us? He wants to scrap Trident and pull out of NATO. Labour would give us capital flight, a run on the pound and a drop in living standards. The biggest threat to our standing in the world, to our defence and to our economy is sitting on the Labour Front Bench.

Q3. [910059] **Maggie Throup** (Erewash) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend undertake to reform the Government's online petition system, which currently accepts unverified signatures from across the world? This fundamental flaw can produce an inaccurate reflection of public opinion on important issues, such as revoking article 50, and leaves our democracy potentially under threat of manipulation by foreign state aggressors.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend raises a very important issue. Like the traditional paper petition system, we need to strike a balance in the e-petition system between allowing people to easily register their support for issues that are important to them while discouraging dishonesty. I have been assured that the Government Digital Service has been constantly monitoring signing patterns to check for fraudulent activity. I am sure she will understand that I cannot comment in more detail on the security measures that are taken, but petitions are subject to checks as part of due diligence.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): I am sure the House will want to join me in welcoming the members of the 6th Royal Scots Reserves who are joining us in the Gallery today and in thanking them for their service.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the cost this Prime Minister will pay to force her disastrous deal through is the price of her departure. Yet again, another Tory Prime Minister is willing to ride off into the sunset and saddle us with a crisis in the UK and an extreme right-wing Brexiteer coming into Downing Street. Does she feel no sense of responsibility for what she is about to do?

The Prime Minister: My sense of responsibility and duty has meant that I have kept working to ensure that we deliver on the result and the will of the people.

Ian Blackford: Let me help the Prime Minister. She can still change course; it is not too late. On Saturday I joined Opposition leaders and 1 million people to demand a second EU referendum, and 6 million people have signed an online petition demanding that the Prime Minister rethinks her strategy. Today this House will give her a way out, a chance to prevent disaster. Will she finally respect the will of Parliament, or will she continue to allow Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom to be held hostage by the extreme right wing of the Tory party and the DUP?

The Prime Minister: I am interested that the right hon. Gentleman joined the march for a second referendum. Last week his policy was revoking article 50, and now his policy is having a second referendum. Let us look at what the Government are doing: the Government are delivering on the vote of the 2016 referendum. What the right hon. Gentleman wants to do is to stay in the EU. *[Interruption.]* All the Scottish nationalists nod their heads and say they want to stay in the EU, and what would that mean? It would mean staying in the common agricultural policy—not in the interests of Scottish farmers. It would mean staying in the common fisheries policy—not in the interests of Scottish fishermen. It is Scottish Conservatives who are standing up for the interests of Scotland's farmers and fishermen.

Q4. [910060] **Bill Wiggin** (North Herefordshire) (Con): Under my right hon. Friend's Government, 1 million more disabled people are in work, but I am sure she would like to do so much more. For example, can she get disabled access for Ledbury station so that disabled passengers can simply get off the train, saving them an extra 20-minute journey to Hereford and back? The Access for All programme is too slow, and disabled people need to go to and from work, too.

The Prime Minister: May I thank my hon. Friend for highlighting the Government's record in helping more disabled people get into the workplace? We do want to tackle the injustices that face disabled people and, as he says, if we are to enable disabled people to go as far as their talents will take them, we need to ensure that they have access to work and are able to travel to work easily, conveniently and confidently, as everybody else does.

Our Access for All programme has an additional £300 million of funding to upgrade historical station infrastructure. I understand that Ledbury station is being considered for part of that funding, and we expect to make an announcement shortly.

Q6. [910062] **Chris Elmore** (Ogmore) (Lab): Violent crime has risen by 19% and robberies have risen by 17%, and we have all seen the devastating and tragic impact of the increase in knife crime in our communities. This is the reality of the Prime Minister's reckless cuts since 2010, with youth centres closed, police budgets slashed and the closure of all early intervention services across the UK. I plead with and beg the Prime Minister to understand that we need more real investment—before any more lives are lost.

The Prime Minister: I say to the hon. Gentleman that South Wales police are getting an increase in their budget in 2019-20. We have protected police funding since 2015, in direct contrast to a Labour party that suggested that it should be cut by 10%.

Q5. [910061] Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con): When I have asked on previous occasions why we cannot stop this ongoing, politically motivated witch hunt of our Northern Ireland veterans, the answer has always been, “We cannot interfere with the judicial process.” But surely the Good Friday agreement was entirely predicated on interfering with the judicial process, with convicted terrorists being let out of prison, royal pardons and letters of comfort being provided to terrorists on the run. I have a son who serves in the Royal Artillery, Gunner Michael Lopresti, the fourth generation of his family to do so. So can my right hon. Friend reassure him that when he goes on an operational tour, which he is very keen to do, if something goes wrong, officers lose control of the situation and terrible mistakes are made, in 50 years’ time he will not be dragged out of bed at six in the morning, taken to a police station, questioned and then charged with murder?

The Prime Minister: First, let me say to my hon. Friend that I congratulate Gunner Lopresti on, and commend him for, the service he is giving to our country. We have been clear, in looking at the issue of Northern Ireland and the legacy there, that the current system is not working well for anyone. On that specific matter, we recognise that about 3,500 people were killed in the troubles, the vast majority of whom were murdered by terrorists. Many of those cases do require further investigation, including those relating to the deaths of hundreds of members of the security forces. That system does need to change, to provide better outcomes for victims and survivors of the troubles. But we are working on proposals across government to take those proposals forward and of course we are looking constantly to make sure that we can give maximum confidence to our brave servicemen and women, who, day in, day out put their lives on the line for us.

Q7. [910063] Stephen Lloyd (Eastbourne) (Ind): We all know that policing has changed significantly over the past 50 years; we have seen that with cyber fraud and cyber-bullying, and the recent tragic increases in knife crime. On the way, the public have lost trust in politicians when it comes to policing. There is a way to restore that trust, Prime Minister: will you commit to setting up a police royal commission, so that facts and evidence, rather than political spin, prepare our police to properly tackle 21st century crime?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to say that the nature of crime is changing—or we are seeing new types of crime being introduced. The police need to have the ability and resources to deal with those, and the understanding of how best to do so. I do not think we need a royal commission to do that; one of the things I did as Home Secretary was to set up the College of Policing, and one of the points of that college is to ensure that it is identifying new types of crime and identifying how best to deal with all types of crime, so that we have the confidence that our police are using the best tools available to them.

Q12. [910068] Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con): I have an unlicensed airfield—Eshott—in my constituency. It is a small business that is continuing a long history of general aviation on that site ever since the airbase was built during world war two as the home for one of the largest Spitfire bases. A neighbours’ dispute is threatening the safety of the runway, but the Civil Aviation Authority is refusing to assist the owners to enforce safety orders. Can the Prime Minister please help us to stop a totally avoidable disaster?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend has raised an important issue, and safety in aviation is absolutely paramount. I understand that she has raised this issue directly with the aviation Minister, who is looking at it carefully as a matter of urgency. We are hoping for a positive resolution for all parties involved. The Minister will be writing to my hon. Friend as soon as possible, but I also know that the CAA has been in contact with all parties involved. She is right to raise this important issue and urgent action is being taken.

Q8. [910064] Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West) (SNP): The condition myalgic encephalomyelitis affects approximately 25,000 children in the UK. When those children’s parents make the extremely difficult decision to remove their sick child from a programme of graded exercise therapy, child-protection proceedings are triggered against many of these families. In the midst of this Brexit chaos, will the Prime Minister commit to looking into this issue, to ensure that loving parents who are caring for extremely sick children are not threatened with that child being taken into care?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady has raised an issue that I was not aware of previously. I am happy to look into it and to make sure that the responsible Ministers look into it, too.

Q13. [910069] Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con): Following the referendum result, the Government have had the responsibility of negotiating the withdrawal and transition, and then there will be future negotiations. Up to now, the deal has not passed Parliament because of three incompatible groups that surround the Government: those who want to stay in, those who want to be out-out, and the Labour party, with its vague policy that even the Labour leader does not agree with. Most people in the country want the Prime Minister to succeed and the deal to go through so that we get the best possible advantage in future arrangements.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right: the message that I consistently get from people throughout the country is that we want to deliver Brexit. There is a way to guarantee the delivery of Brexit, and that is supporting the deal.

Q9. [910065] Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): My constituents are pleased that it has been decided that the UK’s first space launch facility will be in the north of my constituency. They are pleased not least because it gives us a great opportunity to redeploy the considerable skills that we have at Dounreay in Caithness. Does the Prime Minister agree that it is a splendid business opportunity, not only for my constituency and for the UK, but in terms of

building and launching rockets for countries in Europe and the rest of the world that will never have their own launch facilities?

The Prime Minister: I am a little disappointed that the hon. Gentleman did not give me another invitation to come to a hotel in his constituency, but there we are. I thought perhaps I might have been able to look at the spaceport from the hotel windows. He raises an important point, and the development of this spaceport is significant. It will indeed be good for local business and local jobs—skilled jobs in an important area of employment—but as the hon. Gentleman says it will also give opportunities for the UK to offer services to other countries throughout Europe that are not able to provide those services for themselves. It is good for our economy, for the hon. Gentleman's local economy, for his constituents and for the UK as a whole.

Kirstene Hair (Angus) (Con): Unlike most professions, those in the armed forces do not get to choose where they are stationed, but those in Scotland are undoubtedly delighted to serve there. More than 7,000 of our armed forces personnel in Scotland are penalised by Nicola Sturgeon's high-tax agenda. In my view, that is simply unfair. Will the Prime Minister commit to extend for another year the compensation that the UK Government paid last year to armed forces personnel based in Scotland? We need to send a clear signal that the Scottish Government are prepared to penalise those in our armed forces, while it is this Conservative UK Government who will always ensure that those who put their life on the line for our country will come first.

The Prime Minister: First, I pay particular tribute to everyone stationed at RM Condor in my hon. Friend's constituency. She is absolutely right about those brave men and women across our armed forces who put their lives on the line for us. She is also right that both this year and next the SNP's tax hike unfairly hits a majority of our brave and loyal service personnel based in Scotland. That leaves thousands of them out of pocket, and that is wrong, so we will again be providing financial mitigation payments to those negatively impacted for the tax year 2019-20 by these Scottish income tax hikes that mean Scottish income tax is higher than the UK's. A single financial mitigation payment will be made retrospectively in 2020. The Scottish Government may ignore our armed forces; we stand by them.

Q10. [910066] Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): No matter what happens with Brexit, I am sure we all agree that we need a new industrial renaissance in the north. With the northern powerhouse and Yorkshire devolution stalling, is it not about time that we gave the same priority and attention to the Humber docklands as has been given to the London docklands for the last 40 years?

The Prime Minister: I was absolutely clear when I became Prime Minister that we want a country that works for everyone. Our modern industrial strategy is exactly aimed at ensuring that we are developing across parts of the country that need it and that perhaps feel that they have been left behind. The hon. Lady talked about investment in the north and the northern powerhouse. The northern powerhouse is not stalling. We have made

significant investment into the northern powerhouse and into infrastructure in the north, and into the deals that we have negotiated across the north, to ensure that the benefits of the economic prosperity under this Government are felt across every part of our country.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): A very large number of my constituents voted to remain in 2016, many voted to leave and some were not old enough to take part—they all have a view. They and their MP now overwhelmingly want to leave the EU with a deal, so that we exit in a safe way that protects our economy and their jobs and just lets us move on. In the long term, we want a deep and special relationship with the European Union, while embracing the opportunities of the 168 countries that are not part of it. Just so I am clear before I vote this evening, will the Prime Minister confirm—just between us, if she likes—that none of that is contrary to the manifesto that she and I stood on two years ago?

The Prime Minister: First, I thank my hon. Friend for his excellent work as a Minister. He was an exemplary Minister, and I am sorry that he felt it necessary to resign from the Government. We do indeed want a deep and special partnership with the European Union. We also, as he says, want to embrace the opportunities of the 168 countries that are not part of it, by having an independent trade policy. That is precisely what is delivered by the deal that the Government have negotiated with the European Union. We can guarantee our leaving the European Union with a deal and in a safe way by ensuring that the deal is supported, so that we leave the European Union, as set out by the EU Council, on 22 May.

Q11. [910067] Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): Newcastle voted, by 50.7% to 49.3%, to remain. It divided our city, and I was determined that we should not have to vote again, but this is a complete shambles. Parliament gridlocked, Government paralysed, businesses stalled, jobs lost, households stockpiling, our global reputation trashed and a Prime Minister incapable of holding her Cabinet together, never mind the country. Will she consider the possibility that she is making a terrible mistake?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Lady wants to ensure that we are able to deliver on the overall vote of the referendum in a way that protects jobs, our Union and our security, and in a way that is orderly and guarantees Brexit for the British people—she said that she did not want a second referendum—I suggest that she gets behind the deal.

Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con): Two days ago, I asked the Prime Minister if, as absolutely required under the ministerial code and the Cabinet manual, she sought the Attorney General's advice on her authorisation of the extension of the exit date, and whether she would publish that advice. She refused to answer. Distinguished lawyers and former judges are convinced that the so-called international agreement is unlawful; I sent her a letter about that yesterday. The Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has not yet considered the regulations at all. The motion to approve the regulations will come before the House this evening. The European Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Committee will need to see the

advice of the Attorney General before the end of the day, when the motion will be received by the House. Where is the advice of the Attorney General? Will she produce it and withdraw the motion?

The Prime Minister: It is a matter of international law that the date of the UK's exit has been changed. The purpose of the SI this evening is to reflect that change in domestic law. Should the SI not pass, there would be severe uncertainty for citizens and businesses, and contradictory provisions between EU rules and UK rules, but it would be clear that the date of our exit had changed. The House of Commons voted to seek an extension to article 50, and an agreement was reached with the European Council in relation to that. My hon. Friend has raised the question of the commencement order with me previously. The commencement order is due to come into effect on the date that we leave the European Union. I know that he wants to leave the European Union, and we can of course leave the European Union. Dare I suggest to my hon. Friend that, if he cares to back the deal, we could guarantee leaving?

Q14. [910070] **Afzal Khan** (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab): This weekend *The Guardian* reported that 15 Tory councillors who were suspended for Islamophobia or racism had been quietly reinstated. The Conservative party has so far failed to quell fears that it is in denial about Islamophobia. Since I asked the Prime Minister about this issue in June 2018, there has been no concrete action. Will she instruct her party chairman to respond to the three letters that I have sent him on this subject, and when will the Tory party adopt the definition of Islamophobia set out by the all-parliamentary group on British Muslims, as the Labour party, the Lib Dems, Plaid Cymru, the Mayor of London and councils across the country have done?

The Prime Minister: The Conservative party has a complaints process that deals with complaints of Islamophobia and of any other sort against councillors or other members of the party. It is absolutely clear that discrimination or abuse of any kind is wrong. We take action where there are cases of discrimination or abuse. The hon. Gentleman says that we have not acted since he raised this issue in 2018. We have acted on cases. The party chairman takes very seriously any allegations that are brought before the party and we will continue to do so.

Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Most of us would prefer a good deal to no deal at all, but may I urge the Prime Minister to ignore the dire forecasts about what would happen should we leave on World Trade Organisation terms? It is the same people who predicted doom and gloom in 2016 if we voted to leave. Since then, we have had record low unemployment, record high investment and record manufacturing output. Those people were wrong then. They are wrong now. We could be leaving as per the legal default position of article 50, which is without a deal.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend references leaving on WTO terms. Of course, what I want—what I think is right and what the Government consider right for the United Kingdom—is for us to be able to negotiate trade agreements with countries around the world that give us

a better operation with those countries, rather than just the WTO basis. But I also want us to be able to negotiate a good trade deal with the European Union. We want a good trade deal with our nearest trading neighbours, and opportunities for good free trade agreements around the rest of the world.

Q15. [910071] **Jim Shannon** (Strangford) (DUP): I have a very important question for the Prime Minister. There are 1,152 people living with dementia in my constituency alone. With the cost of dementia to society across the whole United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland predicted to be £30 billion by 2021, what commitment can she make to increase dementia research into new avenues of discovery that could lead to a cure or treatment? Will she commit the Government to allocating just 1% of the societal cost of dementia towards research annually?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman raises a very important issue. He mentioned the number of his constituents who are living with dementia. Across all our constituencies, there are increasing numbers of people living with the condition. That is why we have committed to delivering our dementia 2020 challenge in full. The challenge supports research into dementia, which he specifically mentioned. The UK research community is playing a significant role in the global effort to find a cure or a major disease-modifying treatment by 2025. We have committed to double spending on dementia research by 2020—the equivalent of around £60 million per annum—and we are on track to meet that commitment. As he referenced, much of this investment is for research to better understand the nature of dementia, to inform the development of future treatments and to find ways to prevent the onset of the condition. Preventing the condition is of course the best route to take. Meanwhile, we look to provide better treatment for those with the condition.

Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con): Thirty years ago, Margaret Thatcher told the UN General Assembly that the threat from global warming needed an equivalent response from the whole world. What progress is being made on reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute towards man-made climate change?

The Prime Minister: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for raising this very important issue. He has also reminded people that it was a Conservative Prime Minister who was one of the first world leaders to raise the issue of climate change and to put it on the international agenda. He asked about some of the changes that have taken place. Between 2010 and 2017, we reduced the UK's domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 23%; in 2018, nearly 50% of UK electricity came from low-carbon sources; and UK CO₂ emissions have fallen for six years in a row. That is just a few of our achievements. That is our record as a Government. But of course we continue to work internationally to help to deal with this issue, and that is why we believe it is so important to adhere to and remain part of the Paris climate change agreement.

Nigel Dodds (Belfast North) (DUP): I am sure the Prime Minister will join me in welcoming the signing yesterday of the heads of terms—the agreement—on the Belfast city regional deal, the first city deal in

Northern Ireland, which it is estimated will bring about 20,000 new jobs, £350 million of investment by the Government, and a lot of extra investment by local councils and the private sector. Will she confirm that she will do everything in her power, in the absence of devolved government—the civil service signed on behalf of Northern Ireland—to ensure that there will be no impediment to the good progress of that city deal, which has been welcomed right across the community in Northern Ireland?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman raises a very important point about the considerable benefits that these city deals can bring in bringing together provision by both government at all levels and the private sector. I absolutely take his point that in the absence of devolved government we need to make sure that there is no impediment to moving ahead with this city deal as fast as possible and commit to ensuring that that does indeed take place.

Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con): The Prime Minister knows of the huge improvements to the quality of clinical care brought about by the Getting It Right First Time programme authored by Professor Tim Briggs, who I brought to see her, and indeed to see Gordon Brown as well. Given the importance our constituents place on a good service from their local GP practice, will she ensure that the general practice roll-out of Getting It Right First Time is speeded up so that the excellent practice in places like Worksop, Whitstable and Peterborough can be made available to all our constituents?

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend not only for his question but for bringing Professor Tim Briggs to see me. When Professor Briggs came to see me, he did raise this issue of spreading the concept of getting it right first time beyond hospital consultants and into GP practices. My hon. Friend is absolutely right: we should make sure that we do that. We want to make sure that absolutely the best practice is adopted by GP practices across the whole country—that is for the benefit of all our constituents.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): Skin cancer is on the rise in the United Kingdom. As many Members know only too well, it can kill, though when detected very early, or early enough, the NHS is able to perform absolute miracles—thank God. Is it not time, though, in the UK in particular, that we had a major public health campaign to persuade people to check out their body to see whether they have any suspicious moles, to take those suspicious moles to the doctor, to avoid the sun in the midday heat, to cover their children with at least factor 30, and to make sure that we can save lives—because if people are in doubt, they should check it out, and if they do, we can save lives?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman has raised a very important point, and he speaks on this issue from personal experience. He is absolutely right. We need to

ensure that people are aware of the dangers, aware of the signs that they need to take notice of and aware that they need to take them to their doctor, because lives can be saved. The Health Secretary has heard the passionate case that the hon. Gentleman has made in relation to public health information on this, and I am sure that he will be happy to meet him to discuss this further.

Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con): I hope that the American ambassador is enjoying his visit here today as much as he enjoyed his visit to north-east Lincolnshire last Friday, when I was able to join him at Young's Seafood in Grimsby, where we enjoyed some of the finest seafood possible. Does the Prime Minister agree that Brexit increases the opportunity to build on our existing trading relationship with the United States?

Mr Speaker: We hope the ambassador's palate was satisfied. I dare say we will be hearing about it if it was not.

The Prime Minister: I assure my hon. Friend, having recently visited north-east Lincolnshire, that we all enjoy our visits there and seeing the many opportunities across the economy. He talked about seafood and fishing opportunities. He is absolutely right: ensuring that as we leave the European Union we have the ability to have our own independent trade policy means that we will be able to have free trade agreements around the world, including with the United States. As we have heard on many occasions, we are keen on both sides of the Atlantic to be able to pursue that free trade agreement.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): One of the many tragedies associated with this Brexit chaos is the huge distraction it is from other key priorities such as the climate catastrophe. Just this week, we learned that global climate emissions have hit their highest ever level. In the Prime Minister's answer to the hon. Member for Dudley South (Mike Wood), she only gave half the story. The other half is that the UK is way off track to meet our long-term climate targets, and our consumption emissions are down just 4%. Will she support growing calls for a green new deal—a green transformation of our economy, creating hundreds of thousands of good-quality jobs in constituencies up and down this country?

The Prime Minister: First, the hon. Lady should do more to welcome the action that this Government have taken on that issue. Secondly, she will have noted that clean growth is one of the challenges we have set in our modern industrial strategy. For a long time, people used to say that it was not possible to deal with climate change and environmental issues without damaging the economy. That is absolutely wrong. Actually, clean growth is a very good opportunity for us to take economic benefits. When I visited north-east Lincolnshire, I went to Ørsted and saw the work it is doing on offshore wind farms, which is making a huge impact on renewable energy in the United Kingdom. I am pleased that this Government are looking at the opportunity of hosting COP 26 in the UK.

Points of Order

12.47 pm

Helen Jones (Warrington North) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The hon. Member for Erewash (Maggie Throup) made in Prime Minister's questions some allegations about the petitions system. I point out that the petition to revoke article 50 had 96% of its signatures from the UK, and the Government Digital Service has in place both automated and manual systems to detect bots and other fraudulent activity. Can you do anything to ensure that, if Members wish to undermine the most successful parliamentary petitions system in the world, they do so on the basis of facts and find out those facts from the Committee before they raise it in this Chamber?

Mr Speaker: I am very grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. I do not think it is for me to advise on the identification of facts, which I imagine would be an extremely lengthy, possibly painful and conceivably unproductive exercise. However, I do not treat her point with levity. I will not arbitrate between her and the hon. Member for Erewash, and no one would expect me to do so.

I would like, however, to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Petitions Committee under the august and respected chairmanship of the hon. Member for Warrington North (Helen Jones) and to emphasise that the staff who support the Committee display exemplary professionalism. I do not imagine, to be fair, that the hon. Member for Erewash would cavil at that at all; I do not think that that was her point. I want to put on the record that they are dedicated, hard-working and extremely skilled staff discharging a public duty on behalf of Parliament in the public interest.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: I will come to the hon. Member for Shipley (Philip Davies), but first I call Vicky Ford.

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. In order to come into the House of Commons from the tube station today, one has to walk past a large poster saying "Death" and then, underneath it, the words "to democracy". It is not clear how the protesters want to carry out their death wish—whether it is to democracy, to those of us who are elected as part of democracy, or to members of staff who work for us as democratically elected Members—but there can be no place in our public life for intimidation of Members of Parliament or their staff. While we respect the right to free protest, may we ask again if you can look at the right to freedom of speech versus the intimidation of those in public life and how we are protected around this Parliament?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Lady raises an important point, and I respect the force of her observation and the sincerity that underlies it. There is of course a delicate balance between freedom of speech on the one hand and a safe space for parliamentarians and for those who report our proceedings on the other. As the hon. Lady, who is an extremely assiduous participant in the Chamber, will attest, this matter has been raised before in the

Chamber—there is no harm in its being raised again; there is considerable necessity, no doubt, for doing so—and I have made the point that we in this House have made representations to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and had regular contact with Cressida Dick and her senior officers in order to make the case for a more proactive policing approach of a character and on a scale that will protect people going about their daily business either as parliamentarians or as journalists, or indeed as members of the public who fall into neither of those categories.

I know the hon. Lady will understand when I say—I do not say it with an ounce of flippancy; I say it because I think it is right, and I do not think she would suggest otherwise—that I cannot be the poster policeman. It is not for me to police posters, and it is not for any Member of Parliament to police posters. I accept that there is an ambiguity about the poster to which she has referred, and I acknowledge that it may be regarded by some as intimidating. Moreover, many of the threats to people have in particular been threats to female colleagues and female journalists, and we need to take careful account of that. I will relay the hon. Lady's remarks to Eric Hepburn, the Parliamentary Security Director, and, as necessary, will have further discussions with the police.

Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op): Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: I will come to the hon. Gentleman, but I did promise the hon. Member for Shipley (Philip Davies), and it would seem unkind to deny him a moment longer.

Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Recently, the shadow Secretary of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Andy McDonald), who is in his place, came and made a very welcome visit to the Shipley constituency. Unfortunately, he did not have the courtesy to let me know beforehand that he was coming. This follows hot on the heels of the shadow Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell), coming to visit the Shipley constituency, who did not have the courtesy to tell me that he was coming to visit my constituency either. Do not get me wrong, Mr Speaker—they are very welcome to visit the Shipley constituency. Anything that draws attention to the fact that my Labour opponent is a hard-core Corbynista, who will be a loyalist to a Marxist Government in her ideal world, is very much to be welcomed, and I hope next time they will bring Owen Jones and Eddie Izzard with them as well. Would you not agree, however, that they should at least have the courtesy to let me know when they plan to make a political visit to my constituency?

Mr Speaker: Yes. I quite understand Members' desire to visit the constituency of the hon. Gentleman. I say that not merely in the abstract, but on the strength of my very agreeable personal experience. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I visited his constituency with him to speak to school students some time ago, and I positively salivated over the experience, so I can quite understand why others would want to visit Shipley.

Members should do each other the courtesy of prior notification. This matter is now regularly being raised by Members on both sides of the House, and I hope there will not be further recurrences of discourtesy.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind): Further to the point of order from the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford), Mr Speaker—and I see that the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth (Stephen Doughty) wants to raise what I suspect will be the same point. As you know, Mr Speaker, following an incident involving the hon. Member for Chelmsford last week, we have had further incidents outside that entrance to the tube station. There are not simply posters, although that is bad enough; members of our staff are being intimidated in what is now a very much confined area. Further to that, a member of the Lobby told me that when she left this place at 11 o'clock on Monday night, she went past people who were injecting class A drugs. There was then an incident outside the entrance itself, where the gates are into the tube station.

In short, Mr Speaker, a number of us have done exactly what you have asked us to do. We have raised all of this with the senior police commander and directly with the gentleman whose name I have forgotten. The hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth did so in an email, as I know because I was copied in to it. Fine words—no action, and it is not acceptable. What is happening outside that entrance to this place is a serious threat to the safety of everybody who uses that entrance.

Mr Speaker: I think the fairest thing I can say to the right hon. Lady, whose extremely alarming personal experience lends weight to her observation, is that I might usefully convene a meeting with our advisers to be attended by those Members who are airing their concerns today. I think that is the fairest thing I can say, and the Leader of the House herself may wish to attend that meeting. I obviously cannot resolve the issue here and now, but so that we are all in one room and preferably, at the end of the conversation, in the same place, what better way but to have a meeting sooner rather than later? I hope the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) will accept that I cannot pursue it further now, but I hope that is a constructive approach.

Stephen Doughty: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr Speaker: I am not sure how much “further” there is, but I call Stephen Doughty.

Stephen Doughty: Mr Speaker, I just want to confirm to you that I in fact spoke to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner yesterday, after she appeared before the Home Affairs Committee, to raise these concerns directly with her. Unfortunately, this issue is not being dealt with to our satisfaction. We have now raised it with the Home Secretary as well, and with parliamentary security officials. Staff and Members are being threatened.

May I add, Mr Speaker, that the behaviour of some individuals, particularly on social media, with sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, antisemitic and Islamophobic language directed at Members of Parliament because of the ways that they vote and the opinions they hold, has

to be dealt with? There is a huge responsibility on the social media companies to take action as well; it is not just the posters and physical threats of intimidation.

Mr Speaker: I accept that the abuse is wider and must be addressed—indeed, I do—and I thank the hon. Gentleman for saying what he has said.

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask this question to seek your guidance, because I think what I am going to refer to is a novel thing. It has become clear that the Government have been buying Facebook ads to send out—to all of our constituents, presumably—the Prime Minister's views in putting herself on the side of the people and setting the people against MPs. Clearly, Facebook has not been available as a way to do this until recently, but we now have Government money being spent so that the Executive can actually say controversial and potentially dangerous things about the legislature. Can you give me any guidance on how we might pursue this, because it seems to me to be a very alarming new trend?

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Lady had an allegation of contempt to make, it would have to be made in writing to me. More widely, and I am not insensitive to her concern, I think I would need to look at the specifics, and rather than shoot from the hip now and offer a response that may be ill informed and unsatisfactory, I would prefer to offer a well informed and satisfactory response. The route to that might be an exchange between us in writing, and I look forward to receipt of the hon. Lady's letter.

Marsha De Cordova (Battersea) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Two weeks ago, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, the hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), resigned. To date, the Prime Minister has yet to appoint a new Minister to that post. The role has strategic importance and there is utter chaos in the Department for Work and Pensions—there are seven reviews into disabled people being wrongly denied social security, and the assessment framework for employment and support allowance and personal independence payment is in crisis. Those issues are important, and I seek your guidance on how I can go about holding the Government and the Department to account.

Mr Speaker: The short answer is by persistence: persist, persist, persist; pose questions; press the case; push the point of view that you wish to express. This is a very serious matter—I would not dream of treating it otherwise. The hon. Lady is speaking up—as, indeed, the Minister responsible for those matters would be expected to speak up—for the interests of disabled people. However, I hope that she will not take it amiss if I say that although I have a considerable number of matters on my plate, ministerial reshuffles are not among my responsibilities—thankfully so. I rather think the House would echo my saying that thankfully they are not matters for the Speaker.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The House will shortly move on to discuss the business motion, which will, if it is passed, govern the conduct of the indicative votes this afternoon. It states:

[Mr Mark Francois]

“Members may record their votes on each question under arrangements made by”

you, Sir. So may I take it that at some point fairly soon, you will explain to the House what those arrangements are and how they will work? May I ask you specifically to scotch a rumour, which was circulating this morning and is probably inaccurate, that there will be some sort of secret ballot and that constituents will not know how their MPs have voted? Will you explain how—because presumably it will not be in *Hansard*—constituents will be able to tell how their Member of Parliament voted on each of the motions that you select?

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his point of order. I will indeed make a statement or an announcement to the House on that matter in a timely way. Of course, it is for the House to agree—or not, as the case may be—to a business motion. However, in so far as the right hon. Gentleman is perturbed by the prospect of secret—and thereafter to remain secret—votes, I think I can put his mind at rest. There is no such plan. I hope that reassures the right hon. Gentleman. He has a sunny countenance in the circumstances, and we should be grateful for that.

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. On 20 February at Prime Minister's questions, I highlighted the decision by the Tees Valley Mayor to spend £90 million of taxpayers' money on buying the loss-making Durham Tees Valley airport when local people in most parts of the area cannot get a bus home after 6.30 pm. I asked whether the Prime Minister could help them out. She answered by claiming that the bus service had been considerably expanded across the midlands and the north, but according to a letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, outlining the statistics, that is most certainly not the case. The Prime Minister may therefore have inadvertently misled the House. Is there anything you can do to encourage a Minister to come to the Dispatch Box to correct the record and acknowledge that the vast increase in bus services that the Prime Minister suggested simply has not materialised?

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving me advance notice of that point of order. Responsibility for the veracity of what is said in the Chamber is that of each individual Member, including members of the Executive branch, up to the highest level. If a Minister reckons to have made a mistake, it is their responsibility to correct the record. I am not aware of any imminent intention on the part of the Prime Minister to correct the record, but knowing the hon. Gentleman's perspicacity and tendency to focus his beady eye on the activities of Government, I feel sure that he will be looking out for what he thinks is the required correction. Whether he will look out to his advantage or whether he will be disappointed remains to be seen.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. This point of order about today's business is genuine, even though it may seem trivial to others. We are in unique circumstances. It is the first time since I have been a Member of Parliament that a

business motion will not be moved by the Leader of the House at the Dispatch Box. I understand that the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) will move the business motion. He is allowed to be in that position only because he got hundreds of Opposition votes and 30 from the Conservative Benches. I sit on Her Majesty's Government's Benches, and I support Her Majesty's Government—[*Interruption*]*—at least most of the time. [Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker: Order. I was rather enjoying listening to the hon. Gentleman talking about his support for the Government. I thought that I ought to learn more and be educated about that.

Mr Bone: The point is that I assume that the business motion will not be moved from the Dispatch Box, and I understand that. However, surely the right hon. Member for West Dorset should at least move the motion from the Opposition Benches, given that Opposition votes put him in a position to do it. That is a serious point. Otherwise, do I have to move to the Opposition Benches to speak against the motion?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has raised his point with some force and insistence. However, the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) is just that: the right hon. Member for West Dorset. That constituency is represented by a right hon. Member who, for the vast bulk of his career—we came into the House together—has voted with the Government. In recent times, somewhat to his chagrin or even distress, he has felt unable to do so. However, he is making his case today as a constituency Member of Parliament, and he sits on the Government Benches. If he were to perambulate to the other side, it would be regarded at the very least as deuced odd.

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockton North (Alex Cunningham) made a point about the Prime Minister's suggestion that there were 10,000 new bus routes in the midlands and the north. That was quite surprising to those of us who follow transport issues. I seek your guidance on how we could get on the record the actual figures from the Department for Transport. They are that 13,279 routes have been registered and 13,153 routes have been withdrawn, which means that there are actually only 126 new routes. I would be grateful if you explained how that can be put on the record.

Mr Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman well knows, and he comes from a constituency that is very academic, rather highbrow, intellectual—

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab): And he is one.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Lady observes from a sedentary position that “he is one”, meaning that the hon. Gentleman is highbrow, intellectual and academic. He has found his own salvation. He has got his point on the record. I feel sure that copies of the *Official Report* will be veritably winging their way to his Cambridge constituents ere long so they can note his prodigious efforts on their behalf.

If there are no further points of order, we come to the presentation of a Bill. The hon. Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) has been a most patient fellow.

BILL PRESENTED

HOUSE OF COMMONS (PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT
BUSINESS) (EUROPEAN UNION (WITHDRAWAL)
ACT 2018) BILL

Presentation and First Reading (Standing Order No. 57)

Sir William Cash, supported by Sir Bernard Jenkin, John Redwood, Mr Owen Paterson, Priti Patel, Mr David Jones, Mr Mark Francois, Mr Steve Baker, Mr Marcus Fysh, Suella Braverman, Michael Tomlinson and Richard Drax, presented a Bill to give precedence in the House of Commons to Government business in connection with the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 until the United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 5 April, and to be printed (Bill 367).

Sky Lanterns (Prohibition)

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23)

1.9 pm

Ruth George (High Peak) (Lab): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make it an offence to use a sky lantern; and for connected purposes.

Last summer, when, after an unprecedented heatwave, a spate of wildfires was raging around the moorland of High Peak, I was shocked to discover that an American company called the Lights Fest was promoting a sky lantern festival at a venue on the moors above Buxton. A sky lantern comprises a paper lantern and a candle, and this company was selling tickets, at £20 or £30 each, for thousands of people to release naked flames across the tinder-dry moors. At the same time, our fire service in Derbyshire and hundreds of firefighters from Greater Manchester and further afield, as well as park rangers, farmers, gamekeepers and our military, were battling dozens of moorland fires, putting their own safety at risk. I pay tribute to them.

Although our fire service, local councils and the Peak District national park and I all objected to the sky lantern festival, we had no authority to prevent it from taking place as it was organised on private land. I wrote to Lights Fest to set out the local fire situation and to ask it to cancel the event, and Derbyshire fire service did the same, but neither the chief fire officer nor I received a response. In the meantime, local people set up an online petition, which quickly gathered almost 10,000 signatures. Fortunately, at that point the venue refused to host the event, so it was finally cancelled with just days to go. It cannot be right, however, that a company can organise such a dangerous event without us having any jurisdiction to prevent it from doing so.

It is not just on dry moorland that sky lanterns are a problem. They have caused significant fires in recent years, most notably at Smethwick in 2013 where more than 200 firefighters tackled a fire in a tyre depot that lasted for three days, caused £6 million-worth of damage and injured 16 firefighters, three of whom needed hospital treatment. Had it not been for CCTV capturing the sight of that sky lantern descending on those tyres, we would not have known that that was almost certainly the cause of the inferno.

Following that incident, in 2013 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Welsh Government produced a report that concluded that the “fire risk associated with the use of sky lanterns is significant.”

In theory, sky lanterns should remain airborne for as long as they are filled with hot air and should fall back down only when the flame goes out. In practice, however, that is not always the case, and therefore sky lanterns can be a significant fire hazard.

A survey of fire and rescue services found that between 2008 and 2011 there had been eight wildfires in Dorset caused by lanterns and one in Northumberland that took 20 firefighters four hours to extinguish.

The DEFRA and Welsh Government report also found:

“When airborne, sky lanterns pose a safety risk to aviation due to possible ingestion into engines.”

[Ruth George]

The Civil Aviation Authority has said that 48 reported incidents between 2011 and 2012 were due to sky lanterns and helium balloons. The report also states that

“sky lanterns pose a significant risk to the proper and effective operation of coastal rescue services...particularly...red sky lanterns...being mistaken for distress flares.”

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the National Farmers Union are particularly concerned about the injuries caused to animals by sky lanterns, which can result in a long and painful death. The RSPCA has reported numerous incidents, including a foal that had to be put to sleep after his legs were so badly injured from bolting through a fence having been terrified by a lantern coming down, and a barn owl that died having become entangled in a lantern frame.

The RSPCA has said:

“Given our remit, the RSPCA’s focus regarding sky lanterns is the damage they can do to an animal’s welfare. Yet, a ban on their use would also have wider social benefits, chiefly enhancing community safety and reducing fire risk, whilst reducing potential problems faced by coastal rescue services and the aviation sector.”

The NFU has long called for a total ban on sky lanterns, which pose dangers and nuisance to farm animals and our countryside. Sky lanterns are a danger to livestock. Animals panic when confronted with an unusual sight such as a sky lantern. Poultry may smother together, leading to suffocation, and other animals may bolt, causing themselves injury. Sky lanterns often leave behind sharp objects such as the metal or bamboo fragment, which can injure livestock either by direct contact or through ingesting the debris. Sky lanterns also pose a significant fire risk to property, crops and livestock. They are a littering nuisance, particularly when there has been a mass release, resulting in a lot of debris for farmers to clear. For those reasons, the NFU wholeheartedly supports a total ban on their use.

More than 200,000 sky lanterns are sold each year in the UK. Following the Smethwick fire and the DEFRA report, an industry code of conduct said that sky lanterns should

“be of a design and construction to ensure that they only fall back to the ground when the fuel cell flame is extinguished and that, once the lantern has landed, any impact on animals or the environment is minimised.”

However, with a paper construction and a naked flame, no design can guarantee it will work as designed in any weather condition.

Each sky lantern should be accompanied by warnings and instructions for use, including:

“Launching a lantern in an inappropriate location or unsuitable weather conditions, or in any manner that results in damage to persons or property may make you liable for criminal charges or civil claims for damages”.

In spite of that guidance, however, problems are still being caused by sky lanterns, and the companies promoting them are seemingly heedless of the guidance.

Last summer’s event showed the need to prevent the use of sky lanterns. The chief fire officer for Derbyshire has said that last summer’s wildfires resulted in devastation to the natural landscape. Resources from across the UK fire and rescue service were deployed for several weeks, tackling those fires at great cost to the UK taxpayer. As a chief fire officer leading a service whose main aims are to protect our communities by preventing and responding to fires and other emergencies, he was surprised that appropriate legislation was not in place to prevent the proposed reckless release of sky lanterns in the heart of the Peak District at the height of summer. Our chief fire officer therefore supports the proposed prohibition of the use of sky lanterns in England, to protect our countryside, wildlife, the farming industry and beyond.

All Welsh councils have banned the release of sky lanterns on council-owned land, and 70 councils in England—from Plymouth to Carlisle—have done the same. However, they cannot protect our countryside, animals and people from lanterns released on private land. There have been calls from across this House to prohibit sky lanterns. I hope that the advent of the environment Bill will give the Government an opportunity to put in place this sorely needed legislation. In the meantime, I ask the House please to accept my proposed Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Ruth George, Kerry McCarthy, Sir David Amess, Sir Peter Bottomley, Jim Fitzpatrick, Sir Mike Penning, John Spellar, Richard Benyon, Sir Patrick McLoughlin, Julian Sturdy, Antoinette Sandbach and Angela Smith present the Bill.

Ruth George accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 5 April, and to be printed (Bill 368).

Business of the House

Mr Speaker: I inform the House that I have not selected any of the amendments.

1.19 pm

Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset) (Con): I beg to move,

(1) That, at today's sitting –

- (a) any proceedings governed by the resolution of the House of 25 March (Section 13 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018) or this order may be proceeded with until any hour, though opposed and shall not be interrupted;
- (b) the resolution of the House of 25 March shall apply as if, at the end of paragraph (b), there were inserted “and then to a motion in the name of a Minister of the Crown to approve the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019”;
- (c) notwithstanding the practice of the House, any motion on matters that have been the subject of a prior decision of the House in the current Session may be the subject of a decision;
- (d) the Speaker shall announce his decision on which motions have been selected for decision by recorded vote before calling a Member to move a motion under paragraph (f) of the resolution of 25 March;
- (e) the first signatory of a motion so selected may inform the Speaker up to 4.00 pm that they do not wish a recorded vote to take place on that motion;
- (f) having been so informed, the Speaker shall announce that information to the House and may announce a new decision on selection;
- (g) the Speaker may not propose the question on any amendment to any motion subject to decision by recorded vote or on the previous question, and may not put any question under Standing Order No. 36 (Closure of debate) or Standing Order No. 163 (Motion to sit in private);
- (h) debate on the motions having precedence under paragraph (f) of the resolution of 25 March may continue until 7.00 pm at which time the House shall proceed as if the question had been put on each motion selected by the Speaker for decision by recorded vote and the opinion of the Speaker as to the decision on each such question had been challenged;
- (i) in respect of those questions –
 - (i) Members may record their votes on each question under arrangements made by the Speaker;
 - (ii) votes may be recorded for half an hour after the Speaker declares the period open and the Speaker shall suspend the House for that period;
 - (iii) the Speaker shall announce the results in the course of the sitting;
- (j) immediately upon the conclusion of the voting period the Speaker shall call a Minister of the Crown to move to approve the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 and Standing Order No. 41A (Deferred divisions) shall not apply to that motion;
- (k) during the period between 7.00 pm and the announcement of the results on the questions subject to recorded vote –
 - (i) no motion for the adjournment may be made;
 - (ii) the House shall not proceed to a division other than on the question referred to in sub-paragraph (j); and
 - (iii) the Speaker may suspend the sitting if any other business, including proceedings provided for in sub-paragraph (j) and in paragraph (g) of the resolution of 25 March, has been concluded.

(2) That, on Monday 1 April –

- (a) Standing Order No. 14(1) (which provides that government business shall have precedence at every sitting save as provided in that order) shall not apply;
- (b) precedence shall be given to a motion relating to the Business of the House in connection with matters relating to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union other than any Business of the House motion relating to the consideration by the House of a motion under section 13(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, and then to motions relating to that withdrawal and the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union other than any motion moved under section 13(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018;
- (c) if more than one motion relating to the Business of the House is tabled, the Speaker shall decide which motion shall have precedence;
- (d) the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings on any business having precedence before the Business of the House motion at 5.00 pm and call a Member to move that motion;
- (e) debate on that motion may continue until 6.00 pm at which time the Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on that motion including the questions on amendments selected by the Speaker which may then be moved;
- (f) when those proceedings have been concluded, the Speaker shall call a Member to move one of the other motions having precedence;
- (g) any proceedings interrupted or superseded by this order may be resumed or (as the case may be) entered upon and proceeded with after the moment of interruption.

I am very grateful to you, Mr Speaker, and to the House authorities, for the organisation you have tentatively put in place for today. Of course that organisation can only operate if the House approves this business of the House motion.

I would like to begin by explaining, in as plain English as I can, the two paragraphs of which the motion consists, neither of which is in any way complicated, but both of which have been drafted very carefully to ensure that the business proceeds smoothly and in good order as we go through what will no doubt be a quite complicated and highly contentious set of discussions about the substantive motions that have been tabled, from which you, Mr Speaker, have not yet selected, but that will no doubt be announced as a series of selections after we have completed the discussion and votes on the business of the House motion.

Paragraph (1) is an effort to order today's business in an orderly way, given that there may be a considerable number of substantive motions selected by Mr Speaker and that will therefore be debated, and, at 7 o'clock if the business of the House motion is accepted, be voted on. I therefore draw the attention of hon. Members first to paragraph (1)(i), which describes the method of voting. It is the intention that, to avoid taking too long voting on the substantive motions, we should retire into the two Lobbies. The Aye Lobby will be devoted to those whose names begin A to K, and the No Lobby will be devoted to those whose names begin L to Z. There will be, in those Lobbies, voting slips—I think of a different colour, but very similar in character to the deferred Division slips that we have used today and are quite used to using—which will be in a bundle and will

[*Sir Oliver Letwin*]

relate to all those motions on the Order Paper today that have been selected by Mr Speaker for vote at the end of the day.

David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab): This is just a general point. I do not often follow tweets as being law and the way in which things will be, but I have just seen a tweet that says No. 10 will indicate that it will vote against the business motion in an attempt to thwart all the measures the right hon. Gentleman wishes to secure at 7 o'clock this evening. Does he agree that that would be a misuse of parliamentary time by the Government, given the will of the House as expressed only yesterday or the day before?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman is reading a tweet that is a Trumpian tweet or an accurate tweet. I have followed the practice of not paying any attention to tweets of any kind at any time, but it may be, as the right hon. Gentleman says, that the Government will decide to whip Government Members against the business of the House motion. That is, of course, a perfectly legitimate thing for the Government to do if they wish to do it. It is slightly sad, given that those of us who have prepared the business of the House motion took great care to negotiate with the Government a suitable way to include the statutory instrument, which is needed to alter exit day, at the end of our proceedings. That is provided for in orderly way in the business of the House motion and I had hoped that that degree of co-operation might induce the Government to look kindly on the motion. But I am as perfectly aware as he is that it was not the intention of the Government to promote the indicative votes in the way in which the motion does. Therefore, I understand that they may whip against it.

I hope that not only the right hon. Gentleman but those of my hon. Friends who voted for this process in the first place will again vote in a Division, if there is one, to sustain the business of the House motion and to allow us to continue the process that we inaugurated by voting by a narrow, but nevertheless significant, majority for amendment (a), which stood in my name a couple of days ago. I look forward to being in the same Lobby as the right hon. Gentleman as we do that.

Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con): My right hon. Friend said that a significant majority voted in favour of his amendment. It was 329 votes to 302, which was 52% to 48%.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I think my hon. Friend's mathematics is perfect. I observe that he has attached quite significant emphasis to the vote on the referendum result. Therefore, I hope that he joins me in the view that the majority for amendment (a) was indeed significant. I would like to point out to him and to some of my other hon. Friends who share his general views on these matters, which I entirely respect, that I, unlike he, have voted consistently, and will continue to vote consistently, for the implementation of that referendum result through the means of the Prime Minister's deal and through meaningful vote 3, 4, 5 and to infinity. I shall go on voting for the Prime Minister's deal to fulfil the referendum mandate. I profoundly hope that he might change his mind and join me in the Lobby to do so when it is necessary.

Mr Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con): If there is movement towards meaningful vote 3, and there is some indication that there is, will my right hon. Friend and his somewhat successful parliamentary insurgency work with the Government to ensure that there is time, presumably early next week if not this week, for a meaningful vote 3 to be back and presented to this House, either by way of a paving motion or directly?

Sir Oliver Letwin: My hon. Friend asks an entirely reasonable question to which there is an absolutely definitive answer. There has been no insurgency here—

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Oliver Letwin: No. I will in a moment, but I must answer this point first. It is more productive to answer one point at a time.

I am absolutely clear that this is not an insurgency at all. It is an adjustment of the Standing Orders for today, and, if this is agreed, for Monday. It does not affect tomorrow, nor does it affect Friday, should the Government choose to make Friday a sitting day. Either tomorrow or Friday—personally, I would entirely welcome this—the Government may of course bring forward meaningful vote 3, for which I will vote. I hope my hon. Friends will vote for it. I give my hon. Friend a further piece of good news, which he will be easily capable of verifying, which is that should meaningful vote 3 pass on Thursday or Friday, there would be no further need for the whole of this process. This process has come about as a result of the increasing concern that many of us have had across the House of Commons that we were heading not towards an approval of the Prime Minister's deal, but, alas, towards a no-deal exit, which is something I have pitted myself against for many months.

Pete Wishart: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. I am very much enjoying the "Letwin People's Parliament" already. It has much to commend it. I am sure he finds it as astonishing as I do that the Government intend to vote against this business motion. Surely he will agree with me that there was nothing to stop them bringing forward an amendment to his motion today and that there was nothing to stop them bringing an alternative business motion to the House today?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I promised myself throughout this process that I would be honest with the House and I cannot honestly say that I am astonished that the Government are voting against it. Although I regret it, I somewhat suspected that it might be the case—as I suspect, in fact, the hon. Gentleman did—but I do share his view that it is a pity that the Government did not do what would have remedied what the Government described as a constitutional oddity by endorsing amendment (a) and, indeed, at the right moment, by putting themselves on amendment (a) as signatories. Under parliamentary convention, which you, Mr Speaker, supervise, they would of course have immediately arrived at the top of the order and superseded any mere Back Benchers. It would have become a Government amendment and the ordinary order of the proceedings of the House would have been restored. That would have been the natural way to go. Alas, the Government decided not to do that and I understand that they had reasons for that.

Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con): Returning to the subject of how we will vote, will my right hon. Friend say, or might the Speaker be able to tell us, whether the voting papers will be available before we go into the Lobby to avoid a great big crowd and to avoid slowing down the voting procedure?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am sure that Mr Speaker will want to say something about that at a later stage, but I believe that the House authorities, who have been extraordinarily assiduous in this and have gone way beyond their mere duty, will have not only provided for the relevant pieces of paper to be in the Lobbies at an early stage, but provided very large numbers of copies of the Order Paper, so that Members will be able very quickly to refer from the voting slips to the actual motion and nobody has any confusion about what they are voting for or against.

Kate Hoey (Vauxhall) (Lab): The Speaker has ruled that no amendments will be taken with the motion and obviously, I would not challenge him on that. However, is not this business motion today different from what was agreed last week, because now the right hon. Gentleman is proposing Monday as well, and amendment (a), in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central (Gareth Snell), has not been selected by the Speaker? Surely we are now voting on something very different from what was agreed last week.

Sir Oliver Letwin: The hon. Lady is absolutely right that paragraph (2), which I have not yet had time to talk about because of taking interventions, does indeed book a slot for Monday. The reason why is that I think there is quite a high chance that at the end of today's votes, despite the best endeavours of the promoters of each of the motions that fall to be debated and voted on, they may not receive majority backing. Perhaps the hon. Lady was not present, but I said during the debate on my amendment (a), very specifically—this point was echoed by many of her hon. Friends in their remarks about amendment (a)—that we all recognise the fact that the first time round, it is very likely that there would not be a natural majority for one proposition or another and that we should therefore regard this as a process and not as a single point in time. I did also specifically say that I therefore anticipated that we would need a further day. In many discussions and interviews, many of us who have proposed the business of the House motion today and who were supporting amendment (a) have made that point. There is no novelty to it; it is simply carrying through what we said would be the case.

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): Further to the intervention from the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey), does the right hon. Gentleman not agree that given that the Government have spent over 1,000 days on getting to where we are now, it would not be unreasonable for the House to have one more day to try to resolve this matter?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I do rather agree with the right hon. Gentleman about that. This is not the main burden of what I want to say today, but I share what may be his regret that about two and a half years ago, the Government did not take steps to create a cross-party consensus on

this matter. The Irish Taoiseach did exactly that and put himself in a much stronger position as a result. When all this is over and hopefully we have arrived at some sensible way to deal with the whole Brexit issue, I hope that the whole nation will learn that lesson and we will realise that when we have great national undertakings, it makes sense to try to get a cross-party consensus about how to take them forward.

Gareth Snell (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): Further to the point that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey), what assurances can we have that the business of the House motion that we will be asked to support on Monday will not also include another paragraph (2), which seeks to book a third day for indicative votes and a subsequent motion? I believe that the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) referred to it as “daisy-chaining” in a briefing. If that is the case, can the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) be up front about it? Also, what does he think is going to change between today and Monday? Every Member of this House has had the opportunity to table a motion with their thoughts on the way forward. Every Member of this House will have the chance to vote on it in an up and down straight vote, with no knock-out rounds. Will we not just repeat ourselves on Monday with the same potential options and the same votes, with the same arguments?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman, who has played an important part throughout these proceedings, raises both of those points, because they are ones that I wanted to come to anyway. Let me come to them in response to him rather than taking them later.

On the first question of whether there may be later stages beyond Monday, I do not believe that there needs to be any further round of voting after Monday on motions or propositions. I want to be very clear that I have said this to the hon. Gentleman so that he cannot later complain that there was any concealment at all, which is not part of our intention: I believe that if a majority for a particular proposition does emerge on Monday, as I very much hope that it will for reasons that I am about to come to, and if the Government do not immediately signal that they are willing to implement the majority view of the House of Commons at that point and if the Government have not by then—as I hope they have, although others may not—achieved a vote in favour of MV3, I think it would make sense for the House to move to the position of beginning to legislate to mandate the implementation of that majority. I think that would be a reasonable proceeding at that stage. It is only possible if we reach a majority view, of course.

I come now to the hon. Gentleman's second point, which was the question of why Monday will be any different from today. The difference lies in two facts. This will be the first opportunity after a very long time—the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake) made this point—for the House of Commons, in an orderly way, to have the opportunity to express the views of Members in votes on specific propositions and for us all to see the lie of the land. When politicians do that, they very often discover that

[*Sir Oliver Letwin*]

there is a basis for compromise and further informal, offline discussion that can lead to the crystallisation of majorities. In addition, it may be possible to structure the following Monday in a way that precipitates a majority, which it has not been the intention to do today. Today is purely indicative votes, and this is put today in a plain, vanilla way, so that everyone simply votes for all the things that they want to vote for and against all the things that they want to vote against, and we will see what the numbers are. This is purely a first set of indications.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con) *rose*—

Mr Seely *rose*—

Sir Oliver Letwin: I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr Bone), because he made such a splendid case against me earlier.

Mr Bone: I was trying to compliment my right hon. Friend—I was just suggesting he should be sitting on the Opposition Benches. He is making a very interesting and well-thought-out speech, as he always does, and he is being exceptionally honest with the House, saying that on Monday he will again be taking over the Order Paper and that that would then possibly lead to a legislative programme and a Bill to implement whatever comes out as the most likely thing to succeed. Will he give the House an estimate of how many days he is going to have to take over between now and 12 April so that we can have a guide and at least the Government can have a guide to when they might get some of their business done?

Sir Oliver Letwin: The coda in my hon. Friend's remark was, I think, an amusement, in the sense that I do not discern a vast pile of other Government business of the first order of importance currently being transacted in this House. The Government are rightly focused, as we all are, on the question of Brexit. We are approaching 12 April, as my hon. Friend and I both know and as he mentioned. Of course, he has a very different view of what would happen to our nation if on the 12th we left without a deal, and I respect that view. It is not my view and I do not believe that it is the majority view of the House of Commons, as expressed in a series of votes. Those of us who are determined to follow that majority view—as conscientiously as he believes that it is a good thing to leave without a deal, we believe conscientiously that it is not a good thing for our country to leave without a deal—want to prevent that eventuality. The only way we can do that is by crystallising an alternative majority and trying to carry it forward. That is what we will do, but there is an easy route to preventing that, which is for him and his like-minded colleagues, whose positions I understand, to compromise—as many of the rest of us have compromised—and to vote for MV3. Were that to happen, none of this would be necessary.

Mr Bone: What about the number of days?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am sorry—I have not mentioned any more days than the days I have mentioned already because I do not think it will be necessary to have any

more, although, of course, if there were legislation, there would be have to be a day or days for that in the House of Lords.

Mr Seely: I apologise for asking, but I am trying to find out about this process, as I suspect are millions of people throughout the country. I am asking about MV3 next week because, if my right hon. Friend has taken over the Order Paper on Monday, and if, based on the opinion of the House today and on Monday, we legislate for a customs union on Tuesday or Wednesday, MV3 becomes redundant. Is he assuming that the only day for a third meaningful vote on the Government's withdrawal agreement is this Thursday or Friday, or can he envisage a time next week when there may be space for MV3 to come back—for example, before a day of customs union legislation on the Wednesday?

Sir Oliver Letwin: Again, that is a perfectly reasonable set of questions with a definitive set of answers. On a third meaningful vote this Thursday or Friday, that timetable has been set by the EU—it is not the making of any Member of the House or the Government. The EU made it clear in its legal decision that the withdrawal agreement had to be agreed by the House by 11 pm, I think, but in any event late at night, on Friday in order for 12 April not to be activated and to move us to 22 May. That would be necessary for the Government to pass the withdrawal and implementation Bill, which is in turn necessary for their meaningful vote to be meaningful—without the Bill it is a nothing, as both my hon. Friend and others on both sides of the House who study this very well understand. The fact is that the Thursday/Friday schedule this week has been set by the EU, not any of us, and there is nothing that I or anybody else here can do about it. It is very important therefore—for those of us who want to make sure we do not drop out without a deal on the 12th—to ensure that, if my hon. Friends do not support those of us who would be in the Lobbies voting for MV3 by Friday night, there is an alternative, and this is the only way we can do that.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): If the House voted for a particular outcome for negotiation with Europe that the Government thought either not desirable or not negotiable, who would do the negotiating, given that it is normal for only the Government to be a recognised negotiator?

Sir Oliver Letwin: My right hon. Friend, who is one of the two or three most distinguished and long-serving Members of Parliament and had a distinguished record in government, knows as well as I do that he is absolutely right: only the Government of the United Kingdom can negotiate with foreign powers. That is obviously true. It is also true, however, that the Government, like the rest of us, are governed by the law. Just as much as any private individual, Ministers are governed by the law. It frequently happens that, when Ministers bring legislation before the House of Commons and that legislation is amended in a way that they did not wish, they are still compelled to implement the law that the House and the House of Lords have passed as it is written. That is a justiciable matter and they are subject to judicial review if they do not do so. Now, I have said frequently that I

do not think the Prime Minister's Brexit strategy has been ideally suited to the task, but I have never met an hon. Member of this House, or any other living human being, who is more law abiding than the Prime Minister, so I am certain that she would follow not just the letter but the spirit of the law were there a law that flowed from a majority view of the House of Commons.

John Redwood: When, as is normal, the Government have control of the Order Paper, if the House amends legislation in a way the Government do not like, the Government need not bring that law into effect or go through the remaining proceedings necessary to make it a law.

Sir Oliver Letwin: As one would expect, my right hon. Friend is right, but actually the Government often choose not to do that; they often allow legislation that contains things they do not quite like to go forward because they have some greater objective. The truth is, therefore, that Ministers often do—he and I as Ministers had this experience—find themselves implementing legislation with which they are not wholly in accord, but they know how to do that, and the civil service knows how to support them in doing that, and that is of course what would happen in these circumstances.

Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is actually a very novel proposition that the House should have to pass a law to effect Government policy in this way? Can he think of any example in his experience—I cannot think of one, and my experience is longer than his—of the Government pursuing a policy on such a vital national matter knowing that they did not have the support of the House of Commons for the way they were going about it and simply defying the majority that had voted for another approach?

Sir Oliver Letwin: As my right hon. and learned Friend is not just a former Chancellor, Lord Chancellor and almost everything else, but is also the Father of the House, he will certainly have more experience of this than most of the rest of us put together, and if he cannot think of such a case, I will certainly not be able to. I do not know of such a case. Indeed, simply because of the possibility that people would raise this issue, I did some research to try to find out whether there was any such case recorded by historians, who have longer virtual memories than we have actual memories, and I could not find one.

That suggests that there is a pretty strong precedent that if the House of Commons, in a matter of extreme significance to the nation, passed a resolution expressing a clear view of how to proceed, it would be not unlawful—so far as I know, though that would be a matter for the Attorney General to rule on, not me—but nevertheless very constitutionally unusual for the Government not to accede to that resolution and to proceed in the way that the House of Commons had requested them to. I profoundly hope that if on Monday we find a majority view in favour of a particular proposition, the Government will say, as they ought to say, that they will carry that forward. I am merely protecting against the possibility that they take the view that it is not a binding utterance by the House of Commons. Under those circumstances,

we have methods, through legislation, of compelling—undoubtedly by law—an action that otherwise might not occur.

Mr Clarke: My right hon. Friend may recall that the Maastricht treaty caused a little difficulty, on a cross-party basis, in the House. Had the Government been defeated by a motion disapproving of the treaty, would he and others then concerned about the treaty have been content had the Government then proceeded with their declared policy on the basis that they had stood on it at the election?

Sir Oliver Letwin: The answer is no, obviously, as my right hon. and learned Friend intends. He and I were on opposite sides—bizarrely—on that issue. I actually believe that the whole of this imbroglio is largely due to the fact that the wretched Maastricht treaty was approved by the House in the first place. Had there not been qualified majority voting, the British people would probably never have come to disapprove of the EU in the way that they did and we would have been spared all this, but that is ancient history. He and I have a long record of agreements and disagreements at different times. This afternoon, we are agreed.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset) (Con): In response to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), my right hon. Friend said that for the Government to ignore a motion of this House would be constitutionally very unusual, but it has to be said that the process this afternoon is constitutionally deeply irregular.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am particularly glad that my very distinguished hon. Friend has participated in this part of our proceedings. He has not, though he is an assiduous attender of debates, ever had the horror of having to listen to me on this subject because he has not been present when I have been speaking about it, but I have tried to say to those who have been present on each occasion that the proposition he has just advanced is manifestly false, and the reason is this: the Order Paper of the House of Commons—this is the most ancient principle of our constitution as a matter of fact—is governed by the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, and those are the property of the House of Commons and nobody else. They are the property not of the Executive but of the House of Commons. The courts recognise that in the principle of comity and never interfere in the proceedings of our House. That principle goes back not to 1906 when the Government—in my view, improperly—instituted Standing Order No. 14 in its current form, but way back into the origins of Parliament. From the very beginning, Parliament sought to establish its right, through the Speaker and otherwise, to control its own proceedings, which is a very proper thing for Parliament to do. We have been driven to this only in an extreme emergency—that is how some of us see it, though I know that he takes a rather different view—and we are doing it in a perfectly proper way through the amendment of Standing Orders, which it lies open to this House to do.

Mr Rees-Mogg: I cannot entirely agree with the constitutional proposition that my right hon. Friend is advancing. He will recall that, in the Tudor House of

[Mr Rees-Mogg]

Commons, it was Privy Counsellors who guided the business. It is a principle of the greatest antiquity that the business of the House is guided by those representing the sovereign in Parliament. That principle is being eroded by today's proceedings.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I little imagined that we would find ourselves debating the sequence of our constitutional history, but because my hon. Friend is genuinely learned in the matter and this may be my only opportunity ever to have this debate with him in the House of Commons before—thank goodness—I leave it, I want to explain to him that the succeeding history of our country was virtually focused on a debate about that very matter. It was because the House of Commons refused to be dominated by Privy Counsellors that all the things that happened in the later 16th and 17th centuries happened. I am on the side of those in the House whom I actually thought that, on the whole, my hon. Friend was on the side of, who wish to assert, over and against the Executive, that, ultimately, sovereignty lies here and not in Whitehall.

Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab): I am not entirely at one with the right hon. Gentleman, although I have some sympathy with the point that is being made. Surely, however, what we should recognise is that the House has been driven to these unusual proceedings today because the Government have failed to do their job.

Sir Oliver Letwin: We have a stellar constellation here today. The right hon. Lady is another very distinguished Member of the House who has held almost every post imaginable. She tempts me to do what I shall not do, which is to observe that the failure to reach cross-party consensus on this matter had two sides, and it would have been better if the two sides had worked together. That did not happen, and it is because it did not happen that we were at the mercy of the votes of some of my hon. Friends, and that is why we are where we are. I think the right hon. Lady will agree that what matters now is none of that history; what matters now is the fact that we are where we are, and we need to find a solution. That is what this is all about.

Helen Goodman (Bishop Auckland) (Lab): May I bring the right hon. Gentleman back to the business motion? His proposal today is that we should have indicative votes and, depending on where a consensus appears to emerge, the House will have an opportunity to consider these matters again on Monday, and there will be a further business motion for Monday setting out in more detail than paragraph (2) the way in which we will proceed then. I just wonder if he could undertake, as he did before, to share the business motion with the House before the deadline for tabling motions and amendments, so that all Members will be able to make the most of the opportunity on Monday.

Sir Oliver Letwin: The hon. Lady has raised a very serious and important point. I think we should make that commitment, because people need an opportunity to see what rules of play will obtain on Monday and an opportunity to table amendments, and to consider, in the light of that, how to proceed. I believe that, if we are

talking about tomorrow, Thursday—because the House is not currently due to sit on Friday—the sitting will be curtailed at approximately 5.30 pm, after the Adjournment debate. I therefore think—assuming that the House does not sit on Friday—that we should make a commitment to lay the Business of the House motion for Monday by 3.30 pm tomorrow, so that people have two hours in which to look at it and table amendments if they see fit.

Incidentally, I agree with the hon. Lady—it was part of the burden of what I was saying to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke)—that there is ample scope for thinking now, and in the succeeding hours, including tomorrow morning, about possible methods of voting on Monday to encourage, or even to ensure, some further convergence to reach a majority in favour of some alternative.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) (Con): Colleagues argue that there is no precedent for events of this kind. There will in future be precedents for such events. That is the way in which parliamentary rules have developed over many centuries.

Will my right hon. Friend now address the point that we do not yet know and will not know for another hour and six minutes: exactly what motions will we be voting on? We are expected to vote on them at 7 o'clock. Will he ensure that in future the House is given a proper choice, rather than the choice that is put by the Chair?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his observation about precedents. As a former Chief Whip, he knows very well how these things happen. It is indeed the case that our constitution has evolved through a series of adjustments, and there will be a precedent in this instance. I hope, incidentally—because I am not actually a revolutionary—that it will not be taken as a precedent for events like this to take place every day of the week. I profoundly hope that our successors in the House will not for many decades face an emergency of the kind that we are currently facing, because this is not a way of proceeding that I think any of us would like our country to face in the future.

As for my right hon. Friend's point about the motions, I am much more confident than his question suggested that you, Mr Speaker, will select a full range of motions representing a full range of views, and that there will be ample opportunity for people, genuinely and openly, to support the positions that they wish to support and object to the positions to which they object. I think we shall see that when you make your selection, Mr Speaker, because I know that your intention has been—as has mine, and, I think, that of the House as a whole—to use this as a genuine opportunity for people to come together on the basis of looking at a full range of options and having every sensible choice available to them.

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): Is the right hon. Gentleman surprised—does he, indeed, find it incredible—that the Government apparently do not have an opinion on the motions that we will debate later today—apparently the Cabinet will abstain and there will be a free vote for his colleagues—but do have an opinion about denying the House the opportunity to have the debate on indicative votes because they are going to vote against the motion that he is proposing?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am in a very odd position, in that, as it happens, I know, roughly speaking, what the official machine has been saying about the whole of these proceedings. I know that it has been raising very serious concerns about the idea of Parliament acting in this way. In fact, it has even been reported to me that one very senior official described the situation as one in which it was necessary for Whitehall to save Parliament from itself—not in a formal meeting, but outside one.

I understand that because, as a Cabinet Minister for six years, I observed the way in which, in trying to govern the country appropriately, Whitehall necessarily takes the view that the Houses of Parliament as a whole are quite an encumbrance. It tries to govern the country in a way that will, so to speak, tolerate and obey the democratic necessities of a legislature that is sometimes annoying. But, so far as is possible, it governs the process. It is very difficult for the official mind to absorb the fact that, ultimately, that is not how our constitution works. Ultimately, how our constitution works is that Governments depend on confidence in the House of Commons, and the House of Commons—or, at any rate, the Houses of Parliament—is the sovereign body: the Crown in Parliament is the sovereign body.

It is actually a very important point that we are making here about how the country is ultimately governed. In that sense, I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin) that this is a precedent. It is a precedent for Whitehall to recognise that, in an emergency, the House of Commons is capable of controlling its own business in such a way as to find a solution with which the vast majesties of Whitehall and Government have been unable to provide us. If they were able to provide us with that solution, and if my hon. Friends were willing to vote for the proposition which the Government have conscientiously negotiated over a very long time—and, in my view, have rather admirably succeeded in negotiating—we would not be having this discussion. It is because Whitehall has failed, not owing to the inadequacies of any individual but owing to the basic difficulty of the situation, that the Commons is taking these steps, and I think that in those circumstances we are right to do so.

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. He is being very generous.

Our hon. Friends are concerned about losing control of the Order Paper. Is not the answer, therefore, that if the Leader of the House confirms that we will have a meaningful vote on Thursday or Friday, when they go into the Lobbies, they have one motto in mind: “Vote deal, take back control”?

Sir Oliver Letwin: That is a neat way of expressing my hon. Friend’s view, with which, as it happens, I agree.

Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con): I am listening very carefully to my right hon. Friend and I think the thrust of what he is saying is that, if meaningful vote 3 were to be approved, none of this would be necessary to go forward. Will he therefore reiterate his call for those on all sides of this argument to support the withdrawal agreement? It may not be perfect for either side, but it is the best thing we have on offer and now is the time to get behind it.

Sir Oliver Letwin: As my hon. Friend knows, that is my view and has been throughout, which is why I have voted for it throughout and will continue to do so.

Martin Whitfield (East Lothian) (Lab): To come back to the business motion and in particular paragraph (1)(i), could the right hon. Gentleman elucidate what he feels success would be for a motion that we are voting on this afternoon? There is an Aye and a No in the vote, so what will success look like for an individual motion, or is this about a cumulative image created from all the votes for all the motions that Mr Speaker no doubt will choose in due course?

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman brings me back to the business of the House motion, because it is traditional in these circumstances for people who are speaking to say they would like to make some progress and I certainly have not made very much yet. My view is that this is not about the precise number of votes cast for one motion or another, or indeed against one motion or another. It is about whether, when we look at the results as a whole and when we act in the way that I think politicians across the parties acting in the national interest can act, which is to seek a consensus, we get enough data to enable us to have sensible conversations about where we can go next. That is what I think would constitute a success here. I do not know any way to do that other than to have the kind of process we are going through, which is why I suggested we should go through it and so did others.

Dr Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend recall that the last time we went through something remotely like this was in 2009 in relation to Jack Straw’s well-meaning but ultimately doomed attempt to get a sense of where we should be going with House of Lords reform? I fear that today’s proceedings will end up very much in the same place.

Sir Oliver Letwin: But my hon. Friend needs to attend to the point that those of us who are proposing this have exactly recognised that precedent. What went wrong on that occasion above all was that it was a single point in time, it did not produce a single answer and therefore it was declared a failure. We are not seeking a single point in time here; we are seeking a process. We are using the first stage of that process as an act of discovery. We are then having a number of days in which politicians can talk to one another and try to achieve a consensus. That can be reflected in a further vote or set of votes. That is a very different process. I think that had that process been applied in the case of the House of Lords we might by now have had a sensibly restructured House of Lords, which alas we do not. But that is another piece of history that I am sure I must not deal with.

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman is making a powerful case for giving the House the chance today to express its views. Further to the point just raised by the Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, the hon. Member for South West Wiltshire (Dr Murrison), the truth is that we do not know what this will produce. It is called indicative votes for a reason: it is intended to give an indication of what the House thinks. But is not the most powerful

[Hilary Benn]

point that the uncertainty is not an argument for not trying, bearing in mind that we are potentially 16 days away from leaving with no agreement, if the Prime Minister's deal does not pass and if the EU were, heaven forbid, to refuse us a further extension? We should really get on with it.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I completely agree with every word of that. The point the right hon. Gentleman makes is exactly the reason why we are proceeding in this way. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him and his right hon. and hon. Friends with whom we have been co-operating on this. Actually it has been a pleasure and the reason it has been a pleasure is because we share a fundamental concern with the interests of our country to have a way forward that is orderly and does not leave us with a disaster by mistake. We may differ on many things, but on that we are entirely joined, and that is the very purpose of this exercise.

Mr Speaker, although I have not myself said very much of what I was going to say, I think I have now gone on for much too long—[HON. MEMBERS: “Hear, hear.”] It has been in response to quite a lot of interventions. I discern that there are not any more around, so I think it falls to me to resume my seat.

2.4 pm

The Leader of the House of Commons (Andrea Leadsom): Mr Speaker, I rise briefly to respond on behalf of the Government. First, I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin), who has sought to ensure that the Government's business for today, a very important statutory instrument that regularises the legal position vis-à-vis our exit day from the European Union, is able to be addressed.

The Government are disappointed that the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend and others was agreed by the House on Monday. A clear commitment had been made by the Government to provide time for the House to find a majority for a way forward. I take my role as Leader of the House very seriously. I have always been very clear that the Government will listen carefully to Parliament, but today's motion is an extremely concerning precedent for our democracy.

Mr Kenneth Clarke: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Andrea Leadsom: I will not take any interventions, because this is a Back-Bench day in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset.

For many years the convention has been that it is for the Government, as elected by the people, and with the confidence of this House, to set out the business. It is for Parliament to scrutinise, to amend, to reject and to approve. What today does is effectively turn that precedent on its head: those who are not in Government are deciding the business, and there are inevitable—

Nick Boles (Grantham and Stamford) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. My right hon. Friend just claimed that the people elect the Government; is it not the case that the people elect Members of Parliament who, by majority, decide whether they can form, and support and have confidence in a Government?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is constitutionally correct. He has made his own point in his own way with his customary fluency, but the Leader of the House now has the floor again.

Andrea Leadsom: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

What today does is effectively turn that precedent on its head: those who are not in Government are deciding the business, and there are inevitable ramifications to that.

I work constantly to represent Parliament's voice in Government, and today I am genuinely concerned that the decisions we are being obliged to make could result in Parliament being extremely frustrated. It is highly likely that we could be in a position where the preferences of the House simply cannot be achieved. Whatever the House decides needs to be both deliverable and negotiable, and, very specifically, the European Union has been clear in all circumstances that changing the withdrawal agreement is simply not an option.

This Government want to deliver on the referendum of 2016 in a way that maintains a deep and special partnership with the European Union. Urgent action is needed; businesses and people cannot be left in limbo any longer. There are two sides to this negotiation, so I repeat that what the House decides needs to be deliverable and negotiable and also needs to deliver on the referendum.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind): Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Andrea Leadsom: I will not.

The Council conclusions agreed last week set out that the withdrawal agreement in all circumstances must be adopted by the United Kingdom, so I urge colleagues to accept that approving the withdrawal agreement—which is complex and which covers wide-ranging areas from citizens' rights to farming, from overseas territories to security and financial services—has to be the first step. The EU has said that the withdrawal agreement will not be changed, and Parliament needs to accept that before we can look to the future partnership, which is what much of today's debate will focus on.

Notwithstanding the fact that no amendments have been selected, in particular I hope that should the debate today proceed in accordance with the business of the House motion, it will allow for all motions to be fully considered, rather than just a select few. This would enable Parliament to establish what it does want, rather than what the selection would permit. Mr Speaker, the Government have consistently said that we do not support the approach the House has taken to remove Government control of the Order Paper, no matter the circumstances. For that reason, we will oppose today's business of the House motion. While it is now up to Parliament to set out the next steps in respect of today's business, the Government will continue to call for realism in the debate ahead. Any options considered must be deliverable in negotiations with the European Union.

2.10 pm

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): I thank the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) for the business of the House motion, and I hear what the Leader of the House has said. We are living in unprecedented times, and that is why this business of

the House motion has been moved by the right hon. Gentleman. It saddens me to look around the Conservative Benches and see some of the most wonderful, fantastic former Ministers, who have now left the Government because they are frustrated and do not see a way forward.

We on this side of the House are going to support the motion. We know that these are unusual circumstances. The House has decided that it wants to proceed in this way, and all hon. Members that I have spoken to today have made this decision. They are Members who have been working here for a long time, including a former Attorney General, the Chairs of Select Committees, the right hon. Member for West Dorset—who has written manifestos for the Conservative party and played a vital role in it—and a former vice-chair of the Tory party. They are excellent people, and they all agree that something has to be done. Mr Speaker, it is you who has to control the business of the House. I am not talking about personalities; I am talking about the office of the Speaker.

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): I am grateful to the shadow Leader of the House for giving way. The Leader of the House claimed at the Dispatch Box that she spoke for this House in Government. How can we possibly take that at face value when she would not take a single intervention, even though the House has made it clear that the business today was to be decided by the House? And this is where it becomes jaw-droppingly hypocritical, when she says—

Mr Speaker: Order. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not make a personal charge that impugned the integrity of the Leader of the House. Members can make a wider political charge, but not a personal charge.

Wes Streeting: Out of respect for you, Mr Speaker, and for the rules of the House, I will certainly withdraw the word “hypocritical”. However, it was pretty jaw-dropping to hear the Leader of the House claiming that it was the Speaker’s responsibility to select every amendment when she herself believes that we should not vote on a single amendment today and when she will not be casting a vote one way or another on any of them. Is this not just a complete farce?

Valerie Vaz: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention. Hon. Members have mentioned that the House is listening and that the Prime Minister is listening. The Prime Minister has met hon. Members, but she has not listened to them. The fact is that we are in unusual times. This is a hung Parliament, and the Government are governing on the basis of a confidence and supply agreement and nothing else.

Anna Soubry: I am grateful to the shadow Leader of the House for giving way. I am sure that she will give way to the Father of the House as well, unlike the Leader of the House, who sadly did not do so. Does the hon. Lady share my concern at the assertion that the withdrawal agreement cannot be renegotiated, when we were told in no uncertain terms by the Government that the so-called Malthouse compromise, which would fundamentally change the withdrawal agreement, was to be commended and worked on? In fact, I think that public money was spent on advancing it.

Valerie Vaz: I thank the right hon. Lady for her intervention. On the question of whether the withdrawal agreement can be amended, I have sitting beside me the shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer), who has been in discussions with the European Union. We have been in the European Union for more than 40 years, and we know that it would be open to any discussions, such as those that it has held with my right hon. and learned Friend, if that was what was decided. We cannot ignore what our constituents—people of all generations—said to us when they took time out last weekend to tell Parliament exactly what was going on.

Mr Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Lady will recall that the Prime Minister tried to dissuade the House from taking control of the business today by saying that if we did not do this, the Government would allow time for indicative votes to be taken. However, we were never given any details, any clear commitment, or any undertaking that any notice would be taken of those motions. Today, we have an alleged constitutional crisis because the House is setting the business, but if the Government had tabled a motion, an amendment, setting out their own clear proposals for taking the views of the House and discovering what the favoured option was, this whole argument about the process could have been avoided as an irrelevance and we could have resumed the serious business of ensuring that a majority in this House was in support of the Government’s policy being pursued.

Valerie Vaz: I cannot follow that, other than to say that I have always admired the right hon. and learned Gentleman, even before I came to this place. I have always been totally in awe of him, and I absolutely agree with what he says.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): I thank the shadow Leader of the House for giving way. I will support the motion today, just as, with great sadness, I supported a similar motion on Monday to get us here. I will do so because we are living in extraordinary times and because this House of Commons is at an impasse. We, the House of Commons, have to solve this, and this is the last roll of the dice. Otherwise, all the other options, however unpalatable, are on the table. Does she agree, given that the view of this House from out there is not at its highest point right now, that this is an opportunity for the House of Commons to surprise the British public in a good way?

Valerie Vaz: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, with which I agree, and for his work as an extraordinary Minister. He has been absolutely fantastic. I have seen him over the past few weeks, and I know how difficult his decision to resign was. I thank him for being such a good Minister. The key thing is that Members have tried to tell the Prime Minister exactly what the House wants and what it has decided on.

If we simply relied on precedent, Mr Speaker, I do not think that either you or I would be standing here as Members of Parliament today. We would have had to have wealth and property, and for women, we might have had to have something else, if that is not too rude.

Mr Sam Gyimah (East Surrey) (Con): I thank the hon. Lady for giving way, and for the points she has made about precedent and about what we do. Does she agree that, even though we have an unwritten constitution in this country, it is constitutional invention that has got us through in times of national emergency? We had a national Government during the two world wars and a full-blown coalition to solve the financial crisis in 2010. Given that the Government do not have a majority and that it is not clear whether there will be a majority for any of the Brexit options, does she agree that what was needed right from the start was that kind of constitutional invention, and that the lack of it has not really helped with the passage of the Government's withdrawal Bill? We should actually be thanking my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) for doing this. We would rather not be here, but we are, and invention is what is needed at this time.

Valerie Vaz: I thank the hon. Gentleman, another excellent former Minister, and I agree with him. I was sorry to see him leave his position as well; he has been absolutely fantastic.

The point about precedent is really important. None of our rules or procedures is set in aspic. In my working life as a lawyer, I have seen the civil procedure rules turned over. We move forward; we do not look back. With the greatest respect to the hon. Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg), even "Erskine May" is updated.

George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con): Further to the discussion during earlier points of order about whether this is a constitutional outrage, does the hon. Lady agree that since the civil war, this House has always controlled its own time, and that the only reason that the business of the House is normally controlled by the Government is that they have the consent of the majority that they carry and the confidence of the Members who support them? Today, the House is asserting its primacy in controlling the business of the House as it always has done and always will do.

Valerie Vaz: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. The House is only responding today to what it agreed on Monday. Let us face it: we would not have had the first meaningful vote if the House had not agreed to it, and we had to struggle to get it. Speaking of the meaningful votes, the first was lost by 68% to 32% and the second by 62% to 38%.

Mr Bone: Returning to the business under consideration, there has clearly been a change in the Labour party position. Up until today, we had always thought that if the Labour party did not support the Government's position and did not think that the House supported the Government position, it would move a motion of no confidence, which is the normal way to proceed. Instead, there is this establishment of an alternative Government. Does that mean that the Labour party will no longer table motions of no confidence?

Valerie Vaz: I think the correct term—I am sure that you will correct the hon. Gentleman, Mr Speaker—is that we are Her Majesty's Opposition. We are responsible, and we want to try to find a way through, which is what hon. Members on both sides are trying to do.

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab): As we have heard this afternoon, the constitutional implications of what is happening today are profound, and the House will in the not-too-distant future need some mechanism to consider those constitutional implications. However, that should not take away from the fact that we are concerned about the immediate crisis before us. In the interests of pragmatic democracy, it is essential to find a way forward, but we must bear in mind that we will have to return to these big issues.

Valerie Vaz: I cannot add anything to my hon. Friend's excellent intervention.

Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): I will support the motion today. I thank the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn), and I am proud to have worked with them on how to try and move forward. My concern when I first drafted one of the original meaningful vote amendments in December 2017 was that, should the House not agree to a deal, we would need some sort of process or roadmap by which we would then have some chance of moving forward in an orderly fashion. Indeed, the position we are in today is down to a profound lack of leadership from the Prime Minister. She did not involve the House early enough or build a consensus on how to move forward. Instead of the disappointment expressed by the Leader of the House, I am surprised that we did not hear some profound regret that the Prime Minister and the Government had not engaged the House considerably earlier on the negotiating objectives. Instead, they have continued down a track that was clearly going to lead to the same place: defeat every single time.

Valerie Vaz: I agree with everything my hon. Friend says.

Paul Farrelly (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that we are in this situation only because we have a Government unable to govern and a Prime Minister unable to listen to the House despite two resounding defeats? Will my hon. Friend pay tribute to the 30 brave Conservative Members who voted to enable this debate to take place—all under pressure from their Conservative associations—particularly the three Ministers who sacrificed their careers on a point of principle to allow us to have these options today?

Valerie Vaz: I agree. People on both sides who have taken a bold stance have suffered abuse and have been threatened with deselection by their parties, and that is absolutely the wrong way to deal with this.

Richard Harrington (Watford) (Con): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Valerie Vaz: Yes.

Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Order. Before the hon. Member for Watford (Richard Harrington) intervenes, which he should of course have the opportunity to do, we will take a point of order from the hon. Member for Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Angus Brendan MacNeil).

Angus Brendan MacNeil: Given that there are 16 motions to deal with this afternoon, if a Member was to get up now and ask that question be now put, so that we could increase the time for the motions, how might the Chair react to that question?

Mr Speaker: There is no need to move the closure because this is a time-limited debate, and the time limit will be well known to the hon. Gentleman. If he can just contain his impatience, there will be salvation at hand in due course.

Mr Charles Walker (Broxbourne) (Con): Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. You know that I do not want to try your patience, and I apologise, but given that colleagues will be entirely unfamiliar with the voting process that is going to happen this evening, it would have been useful if the Procedure Committee at least could have had a dummy copy of what was going to be used. We could have been reassured that this was going to be something with which the House could get to grips.

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his point of order. He is not merely a distinguished ornament of the Procedure Committee but its illustrious Chair. That is a fact well known to all Members of the House, but it ought to have wider public recognition. The point of order is not a matter for me. However, insofar as there is any concern, the process will be explained at the material time by me from the Chair and, I hope, in a way that will inform and assist all Members.

Will the shadow Leader of the House confirm that she is giving way?

Valerie Vaz indicated assent.

Richard Harrington: I thank the shadow Leader of the House for accepting my intervention and you for your patience, Mr Speaker. Before the point of order, it was mentioned by the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Paul Farrelly) that people such as me who had disobeyed the Whip and resigned may have faced undue pressure from the Whips or our Conservative associations. I did not experience that myself, but some commentators and, indeed, Members of this House have said that voting for the amendment on Monday and supporting this business motion today marks a dangerous revolution or sets a constitutional position of terrible magnitude that could put the country's future at stake. However, I do not accept that one of my constituents will criticise me for reversing the Order Paper for one, two or three days so that Government business does not have precedence. I refute that assertion and ask the shadow Leader of the House for her views on the subject.

Valerie Vaz: These are unusual times. Nobody asked the then Prime Minister to resign after the referendum vote, but he did nevertheless and a new one had to be found. We are in difficult and unusual times. This is one of the biggest issues of the day, and it will not affect the majority of hon. Members here, but it will affect our children and our grandchildren and future generations.

Let us face it: Europe kept the peace in Europe, where some terrible things had happened. I keep saying that the reason why we have the Human Rights Act is that every single human right was breached during the last

war. Europe has moved on from that sort of forum into one whereby we trade with our biggest and nearest partners, and that is why we have a Union that more states want to join. For the sake of future generations, we need to think carefully about what we do today. This is about the will of the House. The House decided that there was a vacuum and the House filled that vacuum. Hon. Members from all sides wanted to move forward constructively, and that why we are in this position today.

Hilary Benn: Does my hon. Friend share my puzzlement at the remarks of the Leader of the House, who gave the impression that, somehow, this has been sprung on the Government when they are only too willing to make provision for indicative votes? I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the Brexit Committee's recommendation published on 16 January, after the Government's deal was first defeated by 230 votes:

"It is vital that the House of Commons is now given the opportunity to identify an option that might secure a majority. We recommend that this is done by holding a series of indicative votes on the options we have set out above as soon as possible."

Here we are on 27 March, which is going some when it comes to "as soon as possible." Does my hon. Friend agree that the Government could perfectly easily have acted earlier?

Valerie Vaz: I pay tribute to the work my right hon. Friend has done on a cross-party basis to bring this issue forward. As I say, these are unprecedented times, which is why the House is in this position. We are pleased that the right hon. Member for West Dorset, along with other hon. Members on both sides of the House, has had the courage to table this motion and put us in this position.

We have had to learn from a certain social media platform that there may be a vote on Thursday, or maybe Friday. Is that the way to conduct responsible government? The Opposition would say no. No one from the Government has had the courtesy to come here—I do not know whether they have informed you, Mr Speaker, but they certainly have not informed us—to say what is going to happen with business on Thursday and Friday, yet people outside do know.

Martin Whitfield: I associate myself with my hon. Friend's comments on the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin).

My hon. Friend makes a powerful point about how future generations will look back at this time, and they are going to judge us by events such as we are seeing in this House today. It is important to remember that the House was pushed and pushed before it decided to take these almost unique steps, and it does so with trepidation, but this is a time when something must happen to remove the logjam of a dysfunctional Government.

I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the question I asked the right hon. Member for West Dorset. What would look like success in the votes this afternoon? He made a very good point that today is about seeing a larger picture of where the opinion of this House lies. Does my hon. Friend agree that today is about finding that overall picture, and that steps taken on Monday may draw it down to a closer point? That is why I support the business motion.

Valerie Vaz: We are trying to help the Government, which is why we need to support these indicative votes today. We are trying to help the Government find out exactly what hon. Members want and do not want. The Opposition support the motion, and we want to find a way forward.

2.33 pm

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset) (Con): I oppose this motion because I think that it is constitutionally ill thought through. Our country does not have a codified constitution, but it works on conventions, and those conventions are precious to those in government and to those not in government, for the tables may be turned at some point and the Labour party may find it has a minority Government and cannot keep the business of the House as it would expect.

Why do the Government need this primacy on the business of the House? As my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) says, it is absolutely right that the Standing Orders are the property of this House and are not challengeable outside this House, and our governmental system works through the Queen in Parliament. The Queen, in this sense, is represented by the Executive, and there is a separation between the Executive and the legislature that we all know about. That separation requires that the proposition of events comes from the Government and that the amendment, review and redress in relation to those events comes from this House.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): One of the conventions that has lasted for a very long time is that a parliamentary Session lasts for a year unless a general election intervenes and makes it more sensible for a Session to be 15 months, or something like that. In a parliamentary Session, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the Standing Orders provide that there should be so many days set aside as Opposition days. That has been completely broken in this Session, which has gone on for nearly two years. We have not had an Opposition day since November, the longest period in living memory.

Mr Rees-Mogg: I agree that it is important to observe the conventions, because the conventions protect the interests of everybody. If the hon. Gentleman is calling for a Prorogation so we may reset and have Opposition days, I would not be opposed to that. It may well be time for a Prorogation.

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): Another convention that has been broken is that the Government should vote on Opposition days and take notice of motions passed on Opposition days. That convention has been widely disregarded by the Government, who are now refusing to take part in Opposition day votes and are completely ignoring anything but motions that demand to be put into effect. Does the hon. Gentleman agree this is yet another example of an established convention, which I always thought would be properly observed by the Government, being discarded?

Mr Rees-Mogg: The issue is that Opposition days have become much more precise and have used the Humble Address procedure to ensure they are taken

notice of by using a correct constitutional approach that is actually better than mere motions on generally otiose opinions.

Mr Edward Vaizey (Wantage) (Con): I call on my hon. Friend's constitutional expertise. Is it an established convention or a novel convention for a Minister to propose a motion at the Dispatch Box and then to vote against it? Is it not the case that, in a hung Parliament, we tend to invent new conventions to cope with our novel situation?

Mr Rees-Mogg: No. I am sorry to say that my right hon. Friend is wrong. There is a very strong history of Ministers proposing motions to aid the House, which was certainly done by Jack Straw during the last Labour Government and by the Government headed by David Cameron. When we reach the end of proceedings and the ability to propose a motion rests only with a Minister, the Minister often proposes it to facilitate the House coming to a judgment. That is quite a commonplace thing, as Mr Speaker will know.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr Rees-Mogg: I will not give way to everyone because there are only 22 and a half minutes to go, and the spokesman for the SNP, the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire (Pete Wishart), will want to speak. I must be conscious of the rights of minority parties—another important convention in this House.

Coming to the nub of the issue, taking control of the business away from the Government is a bad precedent because the House is not willing to come to the logical conclusion that today's proceedings are heading towards. The Government control business as long as, and only if, this House of Commons has confidence in them. My hon. Friends—not the Opposition, who are perfectly reasonable in this regard—should think very carefully about what they are doing, because what they are in fact saying is that they do not have confidence in Her Majesty's Government. If that is what they think, they should vote accordingly. Our great constitutional convention is that these decisions, if they cannot be decided by this House and by the Government who are legitimately installed, go back to the electorate. The reason my right hon. and hon. Friends are not willing to reach that conclusion is that they are going against the electorate's will, as expressed in our greatest ever referendum.

Nick Boles: I always learn from my hon. Friend, but I must disagree with him on this. I am quite capable of distinguishing between my general confidence in the Government, their measures, their Cabinet and their Prime Minister, and their specific conduct on this issue. Furthermore, I point out to him that on that great referendum, which voted to leave the European Union, I have been consistently voting with the Government, in whom I have confidence, and with the Prime Minister, in whom I have confidence, to give effect to that decision, whereas he has been voting against.

Mr Rees-Mogg: My hon. Friend makes a characteristically Wykehamist point: highly intelligent but fundamentally wrong. I must confess that I have sometimes thought my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) was more a Wykehamist than of my own school,

but we will leave that to one side. The expression of confidence in the Government is through their control of business, not on any individual item of business. That is why confidence and control of business come together. This has been taken away in the past, and my right hon. Friend referred to the assertion of parliamentary authority in the civil war—well, we know how that ended. It ended with Pride's purge and with people being prevented from voting. The Government, the Executive and the legislature are clean different things. That separation of powers is essential, the conventions of our constitution are essential and it is important that we observe them properly, because the sovereignty of Parliament is not the sovereignty of us, however brilliant we may be, or of the Mace; it is the sovereignty of the British people. They have told us what to do, and we must do it.

2.41 pm

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): As always, it is an absolute pleasure to follow the hon. Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg). If an example of "taking back control" in a parliamentary party is a spat between him and the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) on Tudor history, I say we cannot get enough of this.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Michael Gove): Stuart.

Pete Wishart: The Environment Secretary, from a sedentary position, invites me to consider the Stuarts. If he would like to go down that route and find a period in history where the Scots had precedence in terms of how this country was governed, he could not give a better example—I am sure the hon. Member for North East Somerset would agree with that fully.

I like this innovation. It a good, creative way to be looking at how we do our business. It is an example, at last, of this House taking back control. What surprises me more than anything else is that those who called the loudest and gave the biggest clarion calls for this place to take back control are those who have the biggest problem with the House doing that very thing. It is strange to see these Conservative Members—I see them all in their places—getting ready to try to make sure that this motion is defeated and things are once again returned to the hands of the Executive.

I am familiar with the speech made by the hon. Member for North East Somerset, as I have heard it before; he talks about the authority of the Executive over the legislature. In terms of the constitution of this place, he is absolutely right, but we are in totally uncharted territory, and in a hung Parliament, we have to look for these constitutional novelties. This motion should be congratulated. The way that it has been engineered and designed by the right hon. Member for West Dorset is almost elegant in defining its purpose. We have this opportunity to do this. It is one the Government could have given us, but they chose not to and so to complain about the fact that it has been made up to the House to do this is churlish.

Talking of churlishness, I have to say to the Leader of the House that I found her speech in response to this petulant and irritable. She was totally ungracious about the way this House has decided to do its business—it is what the House has decided. I find it astonishing that

this Government are going to vote against this business motion, as they had an opportunity to table an amendment. I cannot understand why they chose not to do so.

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): My hon. Friend says that it is great that the House is doing this now, but should it not have been done about two years ago, after the Prime Minister said she would consult across the House and across the UK to agree a plan before going to Europe? She did exactly the opposite.

Pete Wishart: My hon. Friend is entirely right about that, and of course what she says is the case. The Government had the opportunities to reach out to try to determine how this House wanted to progress this whole issue of Brexit, but they chose not to do that. They have spent the past two years talking to themselves, trying to persuade recalcitrant Back Benchers to back a deal that they no longer favour. They are talking to the Democratic Unionist party, at great expense, to ensure that they can secure that party's support. We have had two wasted years, and it is therefore right that this House does take back control and presents the motion before us today.

Mr Gyimah: I understand the concerns that some colleagues have raised about the precedent here, with my hon. Friend the Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg) asking what would happen if the tables were turned. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the genie is out of the bottle and so that is not a reason not to pursue this course of action by voting for this business motion?

Pete Wishart: The tables being turned does not really concern Scottish National party Members, as it is unlikely that we will ever have the opportunity to have this done to us. The hon. Gentleman is right in one respect: this Parliament has changed the way we have done our business. The last change to the Standing Orders—I am sure I am right on this, but the hon. Member for North East Somerset will correct me if I am wrong—was when we introduced English votes for English laws. That is the last time the Standing Orders of this House were changed, much to the detriment of Scottish Members, who all of a sudden found themselves being a different class of Member of this House from other Members across the House. So the Standing Orders are within the gift of Parliament and if it decides to change them, that will be a matter for us. We will determine that in a motion presented to this House.

Seema Malhotra: The discussion about precedent is one we may look back on in due course and ask whether we could have done anything differently. Is it not true that on this issue, which is of such national importance, and where the divisions and the unities go across party boundaries, we are dealing with an unprecedented way in which the country, which has also been kept out of this debate over the past two or three years, is now calling out for Parliament to find a way forward? Is it not also true that the Government ceded control on Monday when they still had an opportunity to bring forward a pathway and process by which the voice of this House could be heard?

Pete Wishart: The hon. Lady is absolutely right about the sequence of events, as this was determined and decided on Monday night. She is right in another respect. I am sure that she, like me, has been having lots of new constituents getting in touch with her, totally aghast at what we are doing in this House and at the fact that such a mess has been made of all this. They are looking at us today, as we take control of this House, to see whether we can do a better job. We cannot do a worse job than this Government have done, that is for sure.

The right hon. Member for West Dorset is not just a putative Prime Minister; he is almost a one-man Government. I was enjoying his contribution until about the 20th to 25th minute of it. I suggest that if we are going to progress this and develop it as an idea, we would do this a bit differently, perhaps with a little more style and panache than we have seen from the Government. I hope that that will be the case.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I am surprised that there has not been more objection to the other innovation taking place, which is that we are going to cast our votes using bits of paper. Some might want to use vellum or quill and ink. If Mr Speaker were to choose all the amendments, that could result in about four hours of voting. So perhaps the real innovation that comes from today is a modernisation of our voting systems, too.

Pete Wishart: That is one fantastic precedent that the right hon. Member for West Dorset has already put in place. We are getting towards electronic voting. For the first time in my 18 years in this House, we will actually be able to vote in a sensible, constructive manner and not waste hours and hours in the Division Lobby when nothing further can be done. I can see you looking at me with an encouragement to conclude my remarks, Mr Speaker, and I will do so with this. I listened carefully, keenly and attentively to the Leader of the House on the radio this morning, as I always do, and I got the impression that this Government are not in the least bit interested in what this House passes today in its indicative votes. I have no reason to believe, for one minute, that they are not going to totally reject, contemptuously, as is now traditional, what this House decides.

Mr Jim Cunningham (Coventry South) (Lab): To come back to the points made by the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) and my hon. Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Seema Malhotra), I have reflected on this situation over the past two or three years, and I find it incredible. One would have thought logic would have told the Prime Minister, before she activated article 50, to get all the interested parties together to find a way forward. Now, two years down the road, the Government still do not have a plan B. It is incredible, to say the least.

Pete Wishart: I describe the Government's approach to Brexit as chaotic and clueless, and nothing will ever distract me from that principle when it comes to the way they have prosecuted this Brexit, which has been such an utter disaster.

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): Does the hon. Gentleman understand that if by some stroke of luck

this House were to come to a conclusion tonight or on Monday on a way forward that was totally contrary to the manifesto that the Government stood on, no Government would wish to negotiate a deal that was contrary to the programme they stood on in the first place?

Pete Wishart: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman is really keeping up with what is happening today with this innovation in which the House determines the process and decides. That should be done without any undue concern for what has been said and done before. For goodness' sake, this is our chance. This is our moment to make sure that we ensure a decisive outcome, which the Government should respect. I really hope that the Leader of the House reconsiders her approach to the indicative votes. I encourage the right hon. Member for West Dorset to continue his approach to coming to a solution that clearly demonstrates the will of the House. At that point, the Government must accept the will of the House.

This is a good day for Parliament and for this House. We cannot make a worse job of it than the Government already have. I hope that they listen carefully to what is said today. The SNP will support the motion.

2.51 pm

Mr Jonathan Djanogly (Huntingdon) (Con): As I see it, the Government position has two clear tracks: the first is that this business of the House process is somehow unconstitutional, and the second is that even if it is constitutional, it is somehow hijacking the agenda.

Let me take the first element. From the perspective of historical precedent, I suggest that the Government are simply wrong. Early in the last century, it would have been absolutely normal and acceptable procedure for legislators to bring forward Bills. Indeed, in the United States legislators constantly introduce Bills in both Houses of Congress. The reason they do that, by the way, is that they got it from us.

Let me move forward to today. There is also clear constitutional precedent for Parliament setting the agenda: they are called private Members' Bills days. We also have Backbench Business days, which are essentially Back-Bench initiatives to take over the agenda. If we can allow it for such business, how much more should we be prepared to allow it when the House is deadlocked and the Government are not setting out plan B on the most important issue to face this country since the second world war?

As for the second element—that we are somehow hijacking the agenda—I refute that absolutely. Nothing is stopping the Government using all days except these two sitting days to set out their own agenda and put forward their own proposals. To claim that taking two days is somehow hijacking the agenda is simply a weak excuse, in my book. This motion represents a parallel process, aimed at breaking the deadlock that exists. I sincerely congratulate all Members who have been involved in setting today's business and promoting an attempt to try to find a way forward.

George Freeman: Although it may be a few years before the House thanks him, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) is doing

this House, democracy, the Government—although I do not think they see it yet—and Brexit a favour, by helping us to reach a resolution. Does my hon. Friend agree that there are three dangerous canards in the House this afternoon: first, that this sets a dangerous precedent, but the House has always controlled its own time; secondly, that this is a remainder conspiracy, but all of us who signed up to this support the Government's proposal and want to get it through; and thirdly, that we are tying the Government's hands, but these are merely indicative votes to give those on the Front Bench some help to see where there might be consensus on a plan B if, heaven forbid, we need it?

Mr Djanogly: My hon. Friend has read my mind. I was going to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) on his remarkable achievement in getting us here today. I, too, supported the Government on both material votes, and if the Government bring the deal back, I will support them again, but I will not stand back and watch our country fall off a cliff into the abyss.

2.54 pm

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): There is one reason and one reason alone why we are debating this business of the House motion, and that is the vacuum created by the Government through their total lack of leadership in this process. There was a very simple way for the Government to defeat the proposal put forward by the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin), but the Government, who were given the opportunity again and again to set out their own path and their own plan for indicative votes, rejected it at every single point.

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): I find the rewriting of history rather bizarre. On Monday, I asked my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the Government would provide their own pathway towards indicative votes this week, and he said yes. That is the basis on which I said it would be better to have the indicative votes led by the Government, which is the best way forward. If we are to hear the voice of this House, does the hon. Gentleman agree that it would be good if we got to vote on all the suggested options, not just some of them?

Wes Streeting: The selection is a matter for the Speaker, as the hon. Lady knows. To be clear, she is right to say that the Government said they would lay out their own path, but when they were asked, by Member after Member, on what day, for how long and on what basis, there was not a single response. The heart of the problem is the Government's making it up as they go along.

The Government have to decide which charge they are laying at the feet of the House: either this is a remainder Parliament trying to overturn the will of the people, as the Prime Minister has claimed again and again, particularly with her incendiary statement last week, or, more accurately, this is a Parliament in which the vast majority of Members who voted remain also voted to trigger article 50, as I did, in the trust and understanding that we would have a Government who would competently manage the negotiations and reach

out across the House and try to build consensus among Members of Parliament and, most importantly, the electorate.

Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab): The nub of this issue is that this entire Parliament has lost trust in the Government, which is why we do not trust them when they say they will bring back motions for debate. Is not the crux of this issue that had the Government wanted to prevent any kind of historical precedent for Parliament taking control of the Order Paper, all they had to do on Monday night was simply accept the amendment tabled by the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin)?

Wes Streeting: I wholeheartedly agree.

With the limited time I have, I wish to say something about the trust that the public have in us as Members of Parliament and in the House of Commons. It is difficult, particularly when the country voted one way and some of us, myself included, voted a different way. It has been a difficult process trying to navigate our way through something that is completely unprecedented in the history of our country—trying to remove ourselves from the most sophisticated political and economic alliance the world has ever seen. It took seven years to organise a two-week sporting event, the London Olympics; it is not necessarily surprising that it has taken more than two years for us to try to negotiate our way out of the European Union.

What is completely unforgivable is the way the Government have botched the negotiations at every turn and failed to try to achieve consensus. At every single stage, when amendments have been tabled, whether on the single market or the customs union, or on different negotiating priorities and different principles, the Prime Minister has said, "It's my way or the highway." That is why we are in the bind we are in now. Whatever our particular views on the referendum, we all have a responsibility to try to break the deadlock, which is what the right hon. Member for West Dorset is trying to achieve—to test the will of the House to see whether there is some way to achieve consensus and to try to find a way through this damaging and unprecedented period of our history. That is the responsibility that now rests on our shoulders. All of us, when we go through the Division Lobby imminently, have a responsibility to show our country that Parliament is taking control of the process, and that we are determined, as Members of Parliament, to act in the interests of our constituencies and our countries at every point.

Whether we voted leave or remain, and whichever options we choose to vote for, we do so for one reason and one reason alone: the furtherance of our national interest—defending the jobs, livelihoods, hopes and prospects of the people who send us here. Whatever our differences, I think that this House is full of people with honour and integrity. We have the opportunity in the coming days and weeks to show that to be true.

3 pm

The Speaker put forthwith the Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Resolution, 25 March).

The House proceeded to a Division.

Mr Speaker: I ask the Serjeant at Arms to investigate the delay in the No lobby.

The House having divided: Ayes 331, Noes 287.

Division No. 385]

[3 pm

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allen, Heidi
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Bailey, Mr Adrian
Bardell, Hannah
Bebb, Guto
Beckett, rh Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
Benyon, rh Richard
Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie*)
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
Blomfield, Paul
Boles, Nick
Brabin, Tracy
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brake, rh Tom
Brennan, Kevin
Brine, Steve
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burden, Richard
Burgon, Richard
Burt, rh Alistair
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, rh Liam
Cable, rh Sir Vince
Cadbury, Ruth
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Chapman, Jenny
Charalambous, Bambos
Cherry, Joanna
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Clwyd, rh Ann
Coaker, Vernon
Coffey, Ann
Collins, Damian
Cooper, Julie
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Costa, Alberto
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crausby, Sir David
Crawley, Angela
Creagh, Mary

Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Cunningham, Mr Jim
Daby, Janet
Dakin, Nic
Davey, rh Sir Edward
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
De Piero, Gloria
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dent Coad, Emma
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Drew, Dr David
Dromey, Jack
Duffield, Rosie
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eagle, Maria
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Ellman, Dame Louise
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farrelly, Paul
Farron, Tim
Fellows, Marion
Fitzpatrick, Jim
Fletcher, Colleen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Freeman, George
Frith, James
Furniss, Gill
Gaffney, Hugh
Gapes, Mike
Gardiner, Barry
George, Ruth
Gethins, Stephen
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Godsiff, Mr Roger
Goodman, Helen
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Gray, Neil
Green, rh Damian
Green, Kate
Greening, rh Justine
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Griffith, Nia
Grogan, John
Gwynne, Andrew

Gyimah, Mr Sam
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanson, rh David
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harrington, Richard
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Hayman, Sue
Healey, rh John
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hermon, Lady
Hill, Mike
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Mr George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Diana
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Darren
Jones, Gerald
Jones, Graham P.
Jones, Helen
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Sarah
Jones, Susan Elan
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Killen, Ged
Kinnock, Stephen
Kyle, Peter
Laird, Lesley
Lake, Ben
Lamb, rh Norman
Lammy, rh Mr David
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lee, Karen
Lee, Dr Phillip
Lefroy, Jeremy
Leslie, Mr Chris
Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Linden, David
Lloyd, Stephen
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lucas, Ian C.
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Marsden, Gordon
Martin, Sandy
Maskell, Rachael
Masterton, Paul
Matheson, Christian
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGinn, Conor
McGovern, Alison
McInnes, Liz
McKinnell, Catherine
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Monaghan, Carol
Moon, Mrs Madeleine
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica
Morgan, rh Nicky
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Nandy, Lisa
Neill, Robert
Newlands, Gavin
Newton, Sarah
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Onasanya, Fiona
Onn, Melanie
Onwurah, Chi
Osamor, Kate
Owen, Albert
Pawsey, Mark
Peacock, Stephanie
Pearce, Teresa
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pidcock, Laura
Platt, Jo
Pollard, Luke
Pound, Stephen
Powell, Lucy
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rashid, Faisal
Rayner, Angela
Reed, Mr Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel
Reynolds, Emma
Reynolds, Jonathan
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Rodda, Matt
Rowley, Danielle
Ruane, Chris
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Ryan, rh Joan
Sandbach, Antoinette
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy
Sherriff, Paula

Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spellar, rh John
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stevenson, John
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick

Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Tredinnick, David
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Umunna, Chuka
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Williams, Hywel
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, Phil
 Wishart, Pete
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Woodcock, John
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Ayes:

**Chris Elmore and
 Jeff Smith**

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Amess, Sir David
 Andrew, Stuart
 Argar, Edward
 Atkins, Victoria
 Austin, Ian
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Stephen
 Baron, Mr John
 Bellingham, Sir Henry
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, Jake
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buckland, Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, Conor
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Cartlidge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Caulfield, Maria

Chalk, Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Clark, Colin
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Cleverly, James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Courts, Robert
 Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, Chris
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Glyn
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Dinanage, Caroline
 Docherty, Leo
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Dowden, Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Ellis, Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Evans, Mr Nigel
 Evennett, rh Sir David

Fabricant, Michael
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Field, rh Frank
 Field, rh Mark
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Gauke, rh Mr David
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Luke
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Hair, Kirstene
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hoey, Kate
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Jones, Andrew

Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Lidington, rh Mr David
 Little Pngelly, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, Scott
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, rh Anne
 Moore, Damien
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Perry, rh Claire
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy

Quince, Will	Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Raab, rh Dominic	Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Redwood, rh John	Syms, Sir Robert
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob	Thomson, Ross
Robertson, Mr Laurence	Throup, Maggie
Robinson, Gavin	Tolhurst, Kelly
Robinson, Mary	Tomlinson, Justin
Rosindell, Andrew	Tomlinson, Michael
Ross, Douglas	Tracey, Craig
Rowley, Lee	Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Rudd, rh Amber	Truss, rh Elizabeth
Rutley, David	Tugendhat, Tom
Scully, Paul	Vara, Mr Shailesh
Seely, Mr Bob	Vickers, Martin
Selous, Andrew	Villiers, rh Theresa
Shannon, Jim	Walker, Mr Charles
Shapps, rh Grant	Walker, Mr Robin
Sharma, Alok	Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Shelbrooke, Alec	Warburton, David
Simpson, David	Warman, Matt
Simpson, rh Mr Keith	Watling, Giles
Skidmore, Chris	Whately, Helen
Smith, Chloe	Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Smith, Henry	Whittaker, Craig
Smith, rh Julian	Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Smith, Royston	Wiggin, Bill
Spencer, Mark	Williamson, rh Gavin
Stephenson, Andrew	Wilson, rh Sammy
Stewart, Bob	Wood, Mike
Stewart, Iain	Wragg, Mr William
Stewart, Rory	Wright, rh Jeremy
Stride, rh Mel	Zahawi, Nadhim
Stuart, Graham	
Sturdy, Julian	
Sunak, Rishi	

Tellers for the Noes:

**Mike Freer and
Jo Churchill**

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

(1) That, at today's sitting –

- (a) any proceedings governed by the resolution of the House of 25 March (Section 13 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018) or this order may be proceeded with until any hour, though opposed and shall not be interrupted;
- (b) the resolution of the House of 25 March shall apply as if, at the end of paragraph (b), there were inserted “and then to a motion in the name of a Minister of the Crown to approve the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019”;
- (c) notwithstanding the practice of the House, any motion on matters that have been the subject of a prior decision of the House in the current Session may be the subject of a decision;
- (d) the Speaker shall announce his decision on which motions have been selected for decision by recorded vote before calling a Member to move a motion under paragraph (f) of the resolution of 25 March;
- (e) the first signatory of a motion so selected may inform the Speaker up to 4.00 pm that they do not wish a recorded vote to take place on that motion;
- (f) having been so informed, the Speaker shall announce that information to the House and may announce a new decision on selection;
- (g) the Speaker may not propose the question on any amendment to any motion subject to decision by recorded vote or on the previous question, and may

not put any question under Standing Order No. 36 (Closure of debate) or Standing Order No. 163 (Motion to sit in private);

- (h) debate on the motions having precedence under paragraph (f) of the resolution of 25 March may continue until 7.00 pm at which time the House shall proceed as if the question had been put on each motion selected by the Speaker for decision by recorded vote and the opinion of the Speaker as to the decision on each such question had been challenged;
 - (i) in respect of those questions –
 - (i) Members may record their votes on each question under arrangements made by the Speaker;
 - (ii) votes may be recorded for half an hour after the Speaker declares the period open and the Speaker shall suspend the House for that period;
 - (iii) the Speaker shall announce the results in the course of the sitting;
 - (j) immediately upon the conclusion of the voting period the Speaker shall call a Minister of the Crown to move to approve the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 and Standing Order No. 41A (Deferred divisions) shall not apply to that motion;
 - (k) during the period between 7.00 pm and the announcement of the results on the questions subject to recorded vote –
 - (i) no motion for the adjournment may be made;
 - (ii) the House shall not proceed to a division other than on the question referred to in sub-paragraph (j); and
 - (iii) the Speaker may suspend the sitting if any other business, including proceedings provided for in sub-paragraph (j) and in paragraph (g) of the resolution of 25 March, has been concluded.
- (2) That, on Monday 1 April –
- (a) Standing Order No. 14(1) (which provides that government business shall have precedence at every sitting save as provided in that order) shall not apply;
 - (b) precedence shall be given to a motion relating to the Business of the House in connection with matters relating to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union other than any Business of the House motion relating to the consideration by the House of a motion under section 13(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, and then to motions relating to that withdrawal and the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union other than any motion moved under section 13(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018;
 - (c) if more than one motion relating to the Business of the House is tabled, the Speaker shall decide which motion shall have precedence;
 - (d) the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings on any business having precedence before the Business of the House motion at 5.00 pm and call a Member to move that motion;
 - (e) debate on that motion may continue until 6.00 pm at which time the Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on that motion including the questions on amendments selected by the Speaker which may then be moved;
 - (f) when those proceedings have been concluded, the Speaker shall call a Member to move one of the other motions having precedence;
 - (g) any proceedings interrupted or superseded by this order may be resumed or (as the case may be) entered upon and proceeded with after the moment of interruption.

EU: Withdrawal and Future Relationship (Motions)

Mr Speaker: We now come to the motions relating to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from and future relationship with the European Union. I inform the House that I have selected the following motions for decision by recorded vote: motion (B), in the name of Mr John Baron; motion (D), in the name of Mr Nicholas Boles; motion (H), in the name of Mr George Eustice; motion (J), in the name of Mr Kenneth Clarke; motion (K), in the name of the Leader of the Opposition; motion (L), in the name of Joanna Cherry; motion (M), in the name of Dame Margaret Beckett; and motion (O), in the name of Mr Marcus Fysh.

I shall, ere long, call John Baron to open the debate—*[Interruption]* No, he does not need to be unduly concerned. He will do so by moving his motion (B), with which it will be convenient to debate all other selected motions on the Order Paper. Debate may continue until 7 pm.

The first signatory of each of these motions has until 4 pm to inform me that they do not wish a recorded vote to take place on their motion. Shortly after 4 pm, I will confirm, on the strength of the intelligence I have received, my selection of motions. At that point, colleagues, voting forms will be printed. They will be available from the Vote Office and in the Division Lobbies from approximately 6.30 pm. An announcement will be made on the Annunciator when they are available. The forms will look very similar to deferred Division forms except that they will be green, and they will list the title and letter of the selected motions. The text of the motions is in the Order Paper. Moreover, I hope it will be judged to be for the convenience of the House, and it has been requested of me, that large numbers of copies of the Order Paper will be available in the Division Lobbies.

The voting period is expected to start shortly after 7 pm and will last for half an hour. During that time, I will suspend the House. The Annunciator will display the end time of the voting period. Members with surnames from A to K should hand in their forms in the Aye Lobby, at the relevant desk for their surname, and Members with surnames from L to Z should hand in their forms in the No Lobby, at the relevant desk. As with deferred Divisions, Members may not vote Aye and No to the same motion.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): Unless they're in the Cabinet. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Speaker: I shall not respond to that disorderly heckle.

However, if that were to happen—what I have just counselled should not—the vote would not be counted. As with deferred Divisions, Members may not hand in forms on behalf of other Members. Each Member must hand in his or her own form. Members with proxy votes in operation will need to get their nominated proxy to hand in their form. A short note is being made available in the Vote Office confirming these arrangements.

I will announce the results in the Chamber as soon as they are ready, which will certainly not be before the conclusion of proceedings on the statutory instrument relating to exit day. The results of the votes will be

published in the same way as deferred Divisions: on the CommonsVotes website and app, and in *Hansard*, showing how each hon. Member voted on each motion.

Colleagues, last Monday—18 March—I made a statement to the House explaining the standard which would have to be reached for me to allow another so-called meaningful vote under the statutory framework provided in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. I cited page 387 of “*Erskine May*” and concluded that a proposition which is the same, or substantially the same, may not be brought forward again during the same parliamentary Session. This Monday—25 March—in the course of answering questions following her statement, the Prime Minister accepted this constraint, saying:

“I am very clear about the strictures that Mr Speaker gave when he made his statement last week, and were we to bring forward a further motion to this House, we would of course ensure that it met the requirements he made.”—*[Official Report, 25 March 2019; Vol. 657, c. 32.]*

I understand that the Government may be thinking of bringing meaningful vote 3 before the House either tomorrow, or even on Friday, if the House opts to sit that day. Therefore, in order that there should be no misunderstanding, I wish to make it clear that I do expect the Government to meet the test of change. They should not seek to circumvent my ruling by means of tabling either a “notwithstanding” motion or a paving motion. The Table Office has been instructed that no such motions will be accepted.

I very much look forward, colleagues, to today's debate and votes, which give the House the chance to start the process of positively indicating what it wants. To move the first motion, I call the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron).

3.26 pm

Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): I beg to move motion (B),

That this House agrees that the UK shall leave the EU on 12 April 2019 without a deal.

Mr Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following motions:

Motion (D)—*Common market 2.0*—

That this House—

(1) directs Her Majesty's Government to— renegotiate the framework for the future relationship laid before the House on Monday 11 March 2019 with the title ‘Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom’ to provide that, on the conclusion of the Implementation Period and no later than 31 December 2020, the United Kingdom shall—

- (a) accede to the European Free Trade Association (Efta) having negotiated a derogation from Article 56(3) of the Efta Agreement to allow UK participation in a comprehensive customs arrangement with the European Union,
- (b) enter the Efta Pillar of the European Economic Area and thereby render operational the United Kingdom's continuing status as a party to the European Economic Area Agreement and continuing participation in the Single Market,
- (c) enter a comprehensive customs arrangement including a common external tariff at least until alternative arrangements that maintain frictionless trade with the European Union and no hard border on the island of Ireland have been agreed with the European Union,

- (d) conclude an agreement with the European Union, which in accordance with Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland of the Withdrawal Agreement supersedes the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in full;
- (e) develop and bring to this House proposals for full and fair enforcement of the rule that EEA migrants must be “genuinely seeking work” and have “sufficient resources not to become a burden on the UK’s social assistance system”, in accordance with the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006;

(2) resolves to make support for the forthcoming European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill conditional upon the inclusion of provisions for a Political Declaration revised in accordance with the provisions of this motion to be the legally binding negotiating mandate for Her Majesty’s Government in the forthcoming negotiation of the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Motion (H)—*EFTA and EEA*—

That this House recognises the democratic duty of Parliament to respect the result of the 2016 referendum whilst securing an orderly departure from the EU that preserves the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; notes that the UK is a signatory to the treaty establishing the European Economic Area and has not given notice to leave the EEA as is required under Article 127 of that agreement; further notes that the UK was a founding member of the European Free Trade Association in 1960 and therefore call on the Government to (a) assert its existing rights as a signatory to the EEA, (b) take necessary steps to make our rights and obligations as an EEA member operable on an emergency basis through the domestic courts, (c) apply to re-join EFTA at the earliest opportunity to make the EEA agreement operable on a sustainable basis and (d) decline to enter a customs union with the EU but seek agreement on new protocols relating to the Northern Ireland border and agri-food trade.

Motion (J)—*Customs union*—

That this House instructs the Government to:

- (1) ensure that any Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration negotiated with the EU must include, as a minimum, a commitment to negotiate a permanent and comprehensive UK-wide customs union with the EU;
- (2) enshrine this objective in primary legislation.

Motion (K)—*Labour’s alternative plan*—

That this House requires Ministers to:

- (a) negotiate changes to the draft Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration so as to secure:
 - (i) a permanent customs union with the EU;
 - (ii) close alignment with the single market underpinned by shared institutions and obligations;
 - (iii) dynamic alignment on rights and protections;
 - (iv) commitments on participation in EU agencies and funding programmes, including in areas such as the environment, education, and industrial regulation;
 - (v) agreement on the detail of future security arrangements, including access to the European Arrest Warrant and vital shared databases; and
- (b) introduce primary legislation to give statutory status to the objectives set out in paragraph (a).

Motion (L)—*Revocation to avoid no deal*—

If, on the day before the end of the penultimate House of Commons sitting day before exit day, no Act of Parliament has been passed for the purposes of section 13(1)(d) of the Withdrawal Act, Her Majesty’s Government must immediately put a motion to the House asking it to approve ‘No Deal’ and, if the House does not give its approval, Her Majesty’s Government must ensure that the notice given to the European Council under

Article 50, of the United Kingdom’s intention to withdraw from the European Union, is revoked in accordance with United Kingdom and European Union law.

Motion (M)—*Confirmatory public vote*—

That this House will not allow in this Parliament the implementation and ratification of any withdrawal agreement and any framework for the future relationship unless and until they have been approved by the people of the United Kingdom in a confirmatory public vote.

Motion (O)—*Contingent preferential arrangements*—

That this House directs that in case the UK is unable to implement a Withdrawal Agreement with the EU, Her Majesty’s Government shall seek to agree immediately and preferentially with the EU:

(a) a trade agreement and/or joint notification of trade preference covering 100 per cent of goods traded between the UK and EU under which no tariffs or quantitative restrictions will be applied between the parties and full cumulation of rules of origin which shall apply for a period of up to two years after the UK leaves the EU notwithstanding that these arrangements may be superseded or extended by further mutual agreement;

(b) a standstill period of mutual recognition of standards and conformity assessment for up to two years in which the UK will ensure compliance in the UK with the EU legislative acquis as adopted in Retained EU law under the EU Withdrawal Act on the day the UK leaves the EU notwithstanding that these arrangements may be superseded or extended by further mutual agreement;

(c) a customs arrangement consisting of advanced trade facilitation measures that enables and makes full and widespread use of simplified and subsidised procedures to perform customs and regulatory declarations and associated control processes away from UK/EU borders; and

(d) make provision for the payment of sums to the European Union in amounts equivalent to the UK’s current net annual financial contribution to the EU for up to two years in respect of the above agreements and arrangements.

Mr Baron: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for choosing this motion.

I refer right hon. and hon. Members to motion (B)—*[Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker: Order. I should be most grateful if—

Mr Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: No, no—I have already called the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay and he has started to speak. In any case, I am on my feet, so the hon. Gentleman should not rise to his feet while I am on mine. Somebody as concerned with procedure as the hon. Gentleman might usefully become acquainted with that important procedural fact.

I was just going to appeal to colleagues—and I think the intervention has helped me to do so—to leave the Chamber quickly and quietly so that we can proceed with the debate and each contributor enjoys the respectful attention of the House which he or she deserves.

Mr Baron: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Just so that the House is absolutely clear, my motion (B) reads:

That this House agrees that the UK shall leave the EU on 12 April 2019 without a deal.

May I suggest to the House that, as we stand at this point in time, this is, in law, the default position of triggering article 50? We all knew, those of us who were here and voted for it in February 2017, what we were

voting for: the motion simply said that we would leave the EU on 29 March with or without a deal, and we passed it by 384 votes.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Baron: I will in a second—I am going to make some progress first.

Although article 50 can be extended—I voted against that—we should still, as a House, reflect on that vote and recognise that, while most of us in this place want a good deal, many of us have taken the view that the deal on offer from the Prime Minister is not a good deal, and therefore the legal default position is that we leave on no deal/World Trade Organisation terms.

Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con): May I ask a clarifying question about the meaning of motion (B)? Does my hon. Friend mean to say that, even if a deal is agreed before 12 April, we should still seek to leave without a deal?

Mr Baron: My hon. Friend is right to seek clarification. The answer is no—my preference, as I have stated, is that we leave with a deal, with the backstop duly amended, so that we could not as a country be caught in it indefinitely. That would be my preference, and then this motion would no longer apply. The date is set in the motion because, as he will know, that is the date given by the EU if there is no agreement.

I remind Members that, while most of us in this place prefer a good deal to no deal, no deal is still preferable to a bad deal. We are left in a position where it looks as though the Prime Minister's deal, unless there is a major shift in this place, is not going to pass—I do not think it will come back, but even if it does, I do not think it will pass. The default position is that we are leaving on WTO terms and I remind the House that, despite all the predictions of doom and gloom, we trade profitably on WTO terms, with the majority of the world's GDP outside the EU. We have been assured on several occasions by Ministers and, indeed, by the Prime Minister that we are prepared for a no-deal exit.

Lady Hermon (North Down) (Ind): I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for allowing me to intervene. Let me take a moment to remind the House and in particular the hon. Gentleman that Northern Ireland has not had a Government since January 2017. We have no Ministers in Northern Ireland. The head of the Northern Ireland civil service has warned as recently as the beginning of this month of the “grave” consequences for Northern Ireland if we were to leave without a deal. Does the hon. Gentleman have any respect at all for the head of the civil service in Northern Ireland or indeed for the people of Northern Ireland?

Mr Speaker: Before the hon. Gentleman responds, it might be helpful to the House if I explain that no fewer than 47 Members are seeking to contribute to the debate from the Back Benches, plus three Front Benchers, with a very constrained timetable. Speeches of more than about five minutes will render it impossible for everybody else to speak. The hon. Gentleman did not know that when I called him, although he could have reckoned with the likelihood of substantial demand. Economy is of the essence.

Mr Baron: I will respond to the intervention by the hon. Member for North Down (Lady Hermon), if I may, and then move on. I have great respect for the people of Northern Ireland. Having served there in the 1980s and got the medals to prove it, I take into account what the people of Northern Ireland, as part of our Union, have to say. At the same time, we are part of a United Kingdom, and there are predictions on both sides of this discussion as to possible outcomes. The Taoiseach has just suggested that we do not need a hard border to solve what has become known as the Northern Ireland backstop problem. There are differences of opinion and we need to recognise that in this debate. I will take note of your stricture, Mr Speaker, and make haste in my remaining comments.

We have been assured by Ministers time and again, in Committees and on the Floor of the House, that we are prepared for no deal. We have spent billions on no deal; £4.2 billion seems to be the current figure. When I posed the Prime Minister a very simple question in the Chamber on 12 February—“Are we going to be prepared?”—she answered in three words: “We are indeed.”

Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset) (Con): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr Baron: I will not.

I have to take at face value those reassurances by Ministers that we are indeed prepared for no deal. There is a prevalent argument that no deal would lead to disaster not only in this place but outside it. I respectfully point out that the people making that argument are often the very same ones who predicted doom and gloom in 2016; they said that would be the result if we voted to leave. Some of the predictions were so dire that they were beyond credibility. We had predictions that 500,000 extra people would be unemployed by December 2016 if we voted to leave; some estimates put it up to 700,000. We had predictions of self-made recessions. We even had predictions of conflict on the continent of Europe. They were all proved wrong. The Bank of England—for the first time in its history, to my knowledge—had to publicly apologise for getting it so badly wrong.

What has happened since then? We have had record low unemployment, record high manufacturing output and record investment, and those decisions in the last two or three years have been made in the full knowledge that we could be leaving the EU with no deal and on WTO terms. I gently remind Members that investment is about comparative advantage. It is about such factors as, what is our corporation tax rate compared with other countries? How flexible is our labour market? What about our top universities? What about our financial expertise? In total, those are of greater influence when it comes to investment than 3% to 7% WTO tariffs. I ask the House to reflect on that, because there are too many wild predictions flying around this place, when the discussion should be based on economic reality.

I would go one stage further. If we introduce a fair and controlled immigration policy, wages will rise faster in this country than if that immigration policy were not in place. That is what Lord Rose, who was leader of the remain campaign leading up to the referendum, said in front of the Treasury Committee. Scare stories that we are all heading for doom and gloom and that goods will no longer traverse customs unions and trading blocs

[Mr Baron]

around the world, which they already do, are very wide of the mark. Let us base this discussion and the votes tonight on economic reality. Much as a few Opposition Members—particularly the SNP—do not like to admit it, we are doing rather well economically, and as I said, those decisions have been based on the possibility of us leaving on no-deal terms.

Given your guidance on timings, Mr Speaker, I will bring my comments to a close. I appeal to the House for rational consideration with regard to no deal. There are a lot of scare stories out there, but this is a repeat of 2016. Those scare stories were wrong then and they are wrong now. Let us have a note of optimism about the future of this country and the capability of this country, and let us back this country. If we cannot get a good deal, let us get back to economic reality and realise that we already trade profitably with the majority of the world's GDP outside the EU on WTO terms, and there is no reason why we cannot trade with the EU on such terms. I recommend that the House support motion (B).

Mr Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman has completed his oration in a timely way, we now proceed to the next contributor to the debate, and I am proposing what might be called an indicative time limit of five minutes.

3.38 pm

Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab): I thank the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) for his great work in making today's proceedings possible. I rise to speak in support of motion (D) in my name and those of the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) and other hon. Members.

This really is five minutes to midnight—for this Parliament, for this Government and for our country—and we desperately need to find a way out of this mess. Our country has spent two years tied up in knots by the Prime Minister's incompatible red lines, which offered such a narrow interpretation of the referendum result. A 52% to 48% vote was certainly not an instruction for a disastrous no deal or for a hard, Canada-style, job-destroying Brexit. It was an instruction to move house, but to stay in the same neighbourhood.

The European Free Trade Association/European economic area model offers just such a possibility. It respects the referendum result without wrecking the British economy. Not convinced? Well, it is worth remembering what Nigel Farage told a "Question Time" audience in 2016:

"I hear people say 'Wouldn't it be terrible if we were like Norway and Switzerland?' Really? They are rich, they're happy and they're self-governing countries."

The right hon. Member for North Shropshire (Mr Paterson), a passionate Brexiteer, told us in 2015 that

"only a madman would leave the market",

and the right hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) has also been supportive of the single market in the past. The point I am making is that, in 2016, Euroscepticism meant something that it apparently no longer means today.

Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Stephen Kinnock: I am sorry, but Mr Speaker has said we have very little time, so I am afraid I will not be able to take any interventions.

Today, Euroscepticism seems to mean setting off into the Brexit fantasy forest of unicorns and rainbows, yet in 2016 Euroscepticism meant simply being opposed to political integration, while cheerleading for the single market. That, in a nutshell, is what common market 2.0 is all about.

What does common market 2.0 require? First, it requires only a renegotiation of the short political declaration on the future relationship, which the EU has consistently told us it is open to amending. The reason why Labour politicians such as me have rejected the Prime Minister's deal is the political declaration, not the withdrawal agreement. That is because the political declaration offers no long-term guarantee on workers' rights and does nothing for the services sector, which is 80% of our economy. It is membership of the single market that delivers for workers' rights and for the services sector. That point was made explicitly by Frances O'Grady of the Trades Union Congress just this morning, and also this morning by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which was absolutely clear—it did not mince its words—that a customs union alone will not deliver on workers' rights or on frictionless trade at our borders. Trade unions and business voices came together to make it abundantly clear that we need single market membership.

Under common market 2.0, we would maintain full participation in the single market through our membership of the European economic area by joining the EEA's only non-EU pillar, the European Free Trade Association. We would add to this a comprehensive customs arrangement with the EU, at least until alternative arrangements to secure frictionless trade on the Irish border can be agreed via other means—for instance, new technology. The EU has indicated that this bespoke combination is available for the UK, given the need to preserve the Good Friday agreement.

A major strength of common market 2.0 is that it is by far the fastest viable route to Brexit. We could be in the EFTA pillar by the summer, and in a customs arrangement well before December 2020, removing almost all the risks of the unpopular backstop ever coming into play—unpopular particularly with some Members across on the Conservative side of the House.

There are very clear benefits to common market 2.0, not least that it delivers on what the majority of the British public actually want from Brexit. On the doorsteps in my Aberavon constituency and in those of my colleagues, we hear the same message time and again from our voters, particularly older voters: "We voted for a Common Market; we did not vote for all the political stuff". Common market 2.0 continues our close economic relationship, but we would leave the EU's political institutions, leave the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, leave the common agricultural and fisheries policies, and leave the EU's drive towards ever closer political union.

We would see a marked improvement in our position on freedom of movement through the safeguard measures written into article 112 of the EEA agreement. These safeguards would give the UK a qualified but unilateral treaty-based right to suspend—

Mr Paterson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way, as he did name me?

Stephen Kinnock: I am sorry, but Mr Speaker has said that we do not have time for interventions.

Mr Paterson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The hon. Gentleman named me and I think it is a convention that the named Member can answer back. He used a quote from a television programme—

Mr Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but the right hon. Gentleman cannot make his point via a point of order. What he describes is customary, but not obligatory. It is not for me to say that people can or cannot intervene and I am not seeking to do so. I am just reminding the House of the time constraints under which we operate.

Stephen Kinnock: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The safeguards give countries a qualified but unilateral treaty-based right to suspend freedom of movement if a country believes that it is suffering

“serious societal or economic difficulties.”

The measures in essence reflect what David Cameron tried but failed miserably to negotiate with the EU before the 2016 referendum. They would end the seemingly limitless nature of EU migration that concerns many voters.

It is often said that the UK would become a rule taker, but that is a ludicrously simplistic view. Under the terms of common market 2.0, the UK would leave the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice and therefore end the principle of direct effect. That is because the EFTA Court that the UK would join respects national sovereignty in a way that the ECJ does not. New laws have to be approved by each nation and their national Parliament. It is also worth noting that we would have one in four EFTA Court judges rather than one in 28 EU judges, and that only one third of EU law applies to the EEA anyway.

We would restore policy-making powers in vast areas, including agriculture, fisheries, foreign affairs, security, justice and home affairs, and taxation. Although the EFTA states take on most single market rules, it is worth remembering that they enjoy the option to delay, adapt or derogate from any single market law or directive. Any decision to incorporate law must be unanimous, so that would give us not a vote in the EU process—because of course we are leaving the institutions—but a veto at national level. Norway and Iceland have derogated from EU law on more than 400 occasions.

The Norwegian Prime Minister has made it clear that her country is ready to facilitate our joining the EEA via the EFTA pillar. Michel Barnier has always said that a so-called Norway-plus deal would work and that it had not been considered only because of the Prime Minister's red lines.

Our common market 2.0 motion brings together leavers and remainers and three different parties. That breadth of support is extraordinary and unique. I am not sure that any other option has that spread of remain and leave opinion—certainly not revocation, a no-deal Brexit or a confirmatory vote. We need to find a way that not just unites the House on a solution that will get us out of the constitutional and political crisis, but begins to reunite our deeply divided country. It is time for British politics to rediscover the lost art of

compromise. It is time for the House to support motion (D), and I genuinely hope that Members of all parties will join me in the Lobby to do so.

3.47 pm

Nick Boles (Grantham and Stamford) (Con): I join my hon. Friend the Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock) in proposing motion (D). I, too, want to make the case for compromise, not as something cowardly but as something courageous. In a divided country and a divided Parliament, finding and sustaining a compromise that most people can support is a noble endeavour. After years of paralysing conflict, we have a moral duty to open our minds this afternoon and reach for a compromise that will allow us to put the interminable Brexit row behind us.

The great strength of the common market 2.0 proposal, relative to all other Brexit compromises, is that it offers something important and valuable to everyone and every party in this House. For Labour Members, it offers the strong position in the single market that, as Frances O'Grady has affirmed, is vital for workers' rights. For SNP Members, common market 2.0 preserves the principle of free movement of labour, which they tell me is essential to Scotland's future economic prosperity and social cohesion. For those in other parts of the UK, worried about the possibility of another massive influx of European migrants such as the one we experienced after Poland and Hungary joined the EU in 2004, it offers an emergency brake, which could be deployed as a temporary safeguard in the regions affected.

For my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Conservative Benches, common market 2.0 offers the prospect of being able to benefit from the free trade agreements struck by the European Free Trade Association, or to do our own trade deals once alternative arrangements to maintain no hard border on the island of Ireland have been agreed with the EU.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): My rule today is to support only suggestions that are realistic and deliverable, and I think that what my hon. Friend is presenting, and what I have read about it, ticks both boxes. Will he confirm that common market 2.0 would not require Northern Ireland to accept different rules from the rest of the UK? That is the stumbling block that has held us in this purgatory for so long.

Nick Boles: My hon. Friend did a heroic thing earlier this week, for which I salute him, and I am grateful to him for literally leading me to my next point. For our allies in the DUP, common market 2.0 removes any threat to the Union, because it keeps every part of the United Kingdom inside the single market and a comprehensive customs arrangement that delivers frictionless trade.

For right hon. and hon. Friends representing Scottish constituencies and coastal communities around the UK, common market 2.0 guarantees our exit from the EU's common fisheries policy and our rebirth as an independent coastal state.

Chris Philp: Will my hon. Friend confirm that common market 2.0 would entail continuing to follow single market rules with no say—the Bank of England has advised against that—and that unlimited free movement

[Chris Philp]

would continue, with only a limited and temporary possibility of restricting it, and that according to the House of Commons Library, financial contributions would continue at about half their current rate?

Nick Boles: I am happy to confirm some of what my hon. Friend says but not the first point about not having a say over the rules. Members of the European economic area follow an absolutely crucial process under the EEA Joint Committee, to which all new rules passed under single market legislation are referred, and they have a right of reservation, which means that the postal directive, for instance, has never been implemented by Norway, because it does not like it and just says no. That right would extend to us if we were to join.

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): My hon. Friend is making an excellent speech. Does he agree that, even under World Trade Organisation rules, every single UK exporter to the EU will still have to comply with all EU rules and regulations? Once a country leaves the EU, there is no way it can somehow remain a rule maker within it.

Nick Boles: Of course that is right; my hon. Friend is absolutely correct. It is also the case that almost every single producer in this country is hardly going to have to follow one set of rules just for their UK sales and another set of rules for their European sales. They will have one standard set of rules and they will probably follow the European ones.

Sir Oliver Letwin: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Nick Boles: I give way first to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin).

Sir Oliver Letwin: My hon. Friend is making a very good case in addition to that made by the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock), who first spoke to the motion. Will my hon. Friend emphasise that more than two thirds of the entirety of directives that currently apply to us as EU members will cease to apply because we will only be in the single market and not the rest of the institutions?

Nick Boles: That is exactly right. Under common market 2.0, the EEA and EFTA, only single market legislation would be relevant to us; we would be free of all of the rest. It is very important to understand that, even by 2011, Norway and Iceland between them had not implemented 300 legislative acts under single market legislation. They simply said no to those acts of legislation.

I will now give way to my right hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Robert Halfon).

Robert Halfon: My hon. Friend has answered my question.

Nick Boles: That gives me more pleasure than you could believe possible.

For all of us in this House who care deeply about the security of our fellow citizens, but perhaps in particular for my good friend the right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), common market 2.0 would offer unfettered access to the databases and information-sharing programmes of the EU. That is only available to countries that are members of the EU or of EFTA.

Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab): Will the hon. Gentleman clarify whether, under common market 2.0, there would be a temporary or permanent customs union?

Nick Boles: My hon. Friend, as ever, puts her finger on the nerve, shall we say. There are different views in the House about our commitment to a future customs arrangement. On the Conservative side, we would like to have a customs arrangement that guarantees frictionless trade until there are alternative arrangements, which the EU has approved, that might set us free to be able to strike our own trade deals. [Interruption.] The right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) shouts “Unicorn” from her seat. Well, that is not exactly what the EU has said. It has just said that it is not ready yet and that it does not know when it will be ready. On the Opposition Benches, hon. Members want to have a permanent customs union. The beauty of our motion today is that it allows us all to vote for it, because the truth is that we do not need to make that choice now. Those alternative arrangements will not be ready for several years and at the next election the Opposition parties can argue for a permanent customs union and we can argue for free trade or the EFTA free trade agreement, and we can agree to pursue our different visions of the future.

Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Ind) *rose*—

Nick Boles: I will give way one last time.

Dr Wollaston: My hon. Friend is making a very powerful case for this being the least damaging form of Brexit. The trouble is that it will end up pleasing no one: neither the remainers who voted to remain, nor a very significant number of his colleagues who voted to leave. Would it not be best, if it does not have the consent of this House, at least to check that it has the consent of the people? Would he agree to link it to a public vote, so that we can check that it really is the will of the people?

Nick Boles: The hon. Lady makes a powerful argument, as she has done consistently. The funny thing about this position is what happened in Norway. It was meant to be temporary for Norway. It went into this thing on its way into the EU. All the Norwegian elite—both sides of Parliament, all the business elite and everybody else—want to get into the EU, but the Norwegian people consistently say, “No, thank you very much, we are quite happy where we are.” Some 65% to 70% of the Norwegian people say, “Do you know what? This halfway house is absolutely perfect for us.” My prediction is that that is what the British people would conclude, too.

Each of us today is a leader. The Prime Minister has one vote, the Leader of the Opposition has one vote, and so does every other right hon. and hon. Member. In years to come, the question that our children and grandchildren will ask us is this: in that historic week

when Parliament took charge of the nation's destiny, what did you do? Did you stand up and lead? Did you step forward to help reunite our country, or did you hang back in your party trench waiting to be told what to do and where to go? I have already made my choice at the cost of my future career in this House. It is now time for others to choose. To all right hon. and hon. Members I say this: if you choose common market 2.0 this evening, the history books will record it as the moment that our country turned a corner and the part you played will be something of which you will be forever proud.

3.58 pm

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): I welcome this debate. It is a historic day for this Parliament and for the power of MPs. In that spirit, I will keep my remarks very short, because this is a day for Back Benchers and for those putting forward their case for particular propositions. I believe there are some 47 Members who want to speak.

Labour's approach today is that we will support amendments that are consistent with the two credible options we have set out on a number of occasions: a close economic partnership based on a customs union and close single market alignment; and a public vote to prevent no deal or a damaging Brexit. We will oppose those amendments that either offer no route forward or set out an approach that is inconsistent with our policy. In that spirit, I can confirm that we will be whipping tonight to support: amendment (K), in my name and in the name of the Leader of the Opposition; amendment (J), the customs union amendment tabled by the Father of the House, the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke); and amendment (M), in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett), which was tabled, of course, after much consultation and support from my hon. Friends the Members for Hove (Peter Kyle) and for Sedgfield (Phil Wilson). I will come on to amendment (D) in just one moment.

Let me start with motion (K), which mirrors the five pillars of the plan that we have set out on many occasions, both in this House and in the letter from the Leader of the Opposition to the Prime Minister in February.

Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Keir Starmer: I will make some progress, because I have spent a lot of time at this Dispatch Box and I have been able to make my case. Others want to make their case today and I want to give them the opportunity to do so.

Motion (K) mirrors the plan that we have set out. It was in the letter from the Leader of the Opposition to the Prime Minister in February. I remind the House that the pillars are a comprehensive and permanent customs union with the EU, close alignment with the single market, dynamic alignment on rights and protections, accompanied by much stronger commitments on agencies and security. We have never pretended that this will be easy or painless to negotiate. It involves compromise and negotiation, but we believe that it could be negotiated, and it would form the basis of a deal that protects jobs, rights and the economy.

Turning to motion (J) on the customs union, Labour's support for a customs union is well known. I want to be clear that a customs union on its own is not enough. A customs union protects manufacturing supply chains and is relevant to the protection of the border in Northern Ireland, but it has to be part of a wider package, hence our motion (K), which sets out the package that we believe is needed. However, motion (J) is worded to specify that a customs union is a minimum part of any deal and we will support it on that basis.

Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Keir Starmer: I will just make some progress and then I will. Turning to motion (M), we will support this motion tonight, because at this stage it is now clear that any Brexit deal agreed in this Parliament needs further democratic approval. That is what this motion would do. It would put a lock around any deal that the Prime Minister forces through at the 11th hour or any revised deal that comes about at this very late stage. It would ensure that any Tory Brexit deal is subject to a referendum lock and it is consistent with commitments that the Leader of the Opposition and I have made from this Dispatch Box in recent weeks.

In relation to motion (D)—the common market and Norway motion—I want to be clear that we have concerns about this proposal, and it has not been our preferred option. We have concerns about the lack of a commitment to a permanent and comprehensive customs union, although I listened carefully to the words that were just exchanged in the House. However, we recognise that this motion would deliver a close economic relationship with the EU and would help to protect jobs, rights and the economy. It is credible and it is deliverable, so we believe that this motion should remain an option and continue in the process. We will therefore be recommending that Labour Members vote for it tonight.

This is an extremely important and welcome debate. It is frankly two years overdue. This is the debate that the Prime Minister should have started two years ago at the beginning of the process, but we are where we are, and Parliament finally has the chance to shape the way out of the Prime Minister's mess.

4.2 pm

Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con): I join those who have congratulated my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) on giving us this opportunity. At last we are seeing, as we go along, that the House is moving into a mood where it is going to be possible to end the catastrophic shambles of the last six months. We are beginning to talk about actually being able to take decisions founded on some sort of cross-party consensus and some search for a majority that can be sustained through the difficult and long negotiations that will be required to reach agreement on our final relations with the European Union. It seems to me that it is up to the House to respond to that properly and deal with this procedure, with a willingness to compromise with one another and move towards some eventual binding recommendation to the Government about the way in which things should be conducted in future. I shall certainly approach this in that way.

[Mr Kenneth Clarke]

My right hon. Friend has also helped the Government, although they are bitterly resistant to what he has done, raising absurd constitutional arguments, which are complete fiction and which they could have remedied easily if they had put down their own proposals for having indicative votes, as they told us that they were going to two days ago. This hair-splitting thing about it being the Government who should table business motions, and not Back Benchers, is a completely piffling irrelevance. He has actually helped them considerably: I have never seen the right-wing members of the European Research Group more apparently panicked by the way the House as a whole is moving. They are demonstrably in a minority, their dreams of a no-deal departure are fading, and despite their frequent meetings with the Prime Minister and their gliding into Chequers at the weekend, they are beginning to peel off one by one, having first rebuffed it.

I congratulate those who put this process together and those Ministers who resigned to get this pressure going and bring us nearer to reality, and I will turn now to the substance of how I am going to vote. As I have said, I will vote not for my first preference—I will when it occurs—but for that which I can live with. Unfortunately, I think we are doomed to leave the European Union within the next two or three years. My duty now is to exercise my own judgment as to what is in the national interest, will minimise the damaging consequences and will perhaps save some of the better features for future generations.

As I have said before, the obvious compromise is, unfortunately, to give up the political European Union and leave the political institution and remain in the common market, as the public still call it—the customs union and the single market—thereby avoiding problems at the borders and for business, ensuring the smooth running of trade, and so on.

Angus Brendan MacNeil *rose*—

Mr Clarke: I am sorry, but I cannot give way. I would like to—I have been collaborating with the hon. Gentleman—but I must take notice of time.

Under such a compromise, we would continue to enjoy the economic advantages of being in the biggest and most prosperous international free trade area in the world and begin to reconcile the 52% with the 48%. Most sensible members of the public, however passionate their views, be they remain or leave, could see the sense in coming together around such a compromise. It was the main Eurosceptic demand 20 years ago: leave the EU but not the common market. If we solved that, we could begin to repair the dreadful political mood in the country.

I will vote for revoke whenever it appears, because that is my personal preference, but that is self-indulgence, and I will support—[*Laughter.*] If we get a majority, I will be delighted.

Angus Brendan MacNeil *rose*—

Mr Clarke: I will not give way to my fellow collaborator on revoking.

I will support common market 2.0 and anything that resembles it, though I will not dwell on it further, as I have already dealt with it. I come then to my motion (J).

As I have already indicated, it is not my first preference—the two I have already named are my preferences—but it is tabled to maximise support in the House so that we can move on Monday towards our really taking control and actually putting the Government, though they do not accept it, in a much stronger position than they are today when it comes to the future negotiations.

Motion (J) advocates a customs union only—a permanent customs union, I point out to the hon. Member for Leicester West (Liz Kendall), who intervened earlier on this point—and would keep the minimum needed for frictionless trade and an open border in Ireland. We would also need some understanding or moves on regulatory convergence, but that does not need to be dealt with at this stage. If we started with the premise that we will be permanently in a customs union, it would bring greater clarity to the next stage—the really important stage—of the negotiations. I think that every other EU member state would be ready to accede to that, and it would improve the climate of the negotiations.

The motion is designed to appeal in particular to Labour Members who are demanding it and to my more cautious right hon. and hon. Friends in the Conservative party. Those who have hang-ups about rule making and use medieval language about vassal states and all the rest of it are talking about the single market. Motion (J) does not include the single market. The customs union guarantees a reasonably frictionless relationship and the possibility of completely open trade in the future, and leaves all the other things to be decided in the negotiations.

Greg Hands: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr Clarke: No, I will not.

That is the basis on which I tabled motion (J), and I commend it to the House. Members may prefer a different motion; I shall vote for several. I think that we should all vote for as many of the motions as we can, and then we will see which is the strongest. We will not be dismissed by the more fervent members of the Government saying that they have all been defeated, and none of them secured an individual majority. On Monday, we could move on to how we sift them out.

Above all, for Labour Members this will, I hope, pave the way for allowing the withdrawal agreement to go through, because their main argument is not about the contents of the withdrawal agreement but about the “blind Brexit” that worries them so much. Even in motion (J)—if we cannot get a stronger one—there is not a blind Brexit any more. Labour Members could at least abstain, so that we could secure the withdrawal agreement and then move on to what really matters—the serious long-term negotiations on the big issues, which we shall have to handle much better than we are doing now.

My last word is this. If we fail, and if we are faced in a fortnight’s time with no deal, I think the feeling in the House is so strongly against that outcome that we must all vote to revoke at that stage. A great many members of the public will probably think that we have got ourselves into such a mess that it might have been sensible to do that anyway. We should stop now, sort out what we are doing, and perhaps start again if the House is still enthusiastic about leaving. However, I

hope we can avoid that conclusion by demonstrating that Parliament is capable of orderly debate, reasonable conclusions, and contributing to the better governance of this country as part of this process—including, I hope, my motion (J).

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. Before I call the next speaker, I can tell the House that no lead sponsors have informed me—and I indicated that they needed to do so before 4 pm—that they do not wish a recorded vote to take place on their motion. I can therefore confirm that the motions on which Members will be able to vote are as previously announced, namely (B) for Baron, (D) in the name of Nick Boles, (H) in the name of George Eustice, (J) in the name of Mr Kenneth Clarke, (K) in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, (L) in the name of Joanna Cherry, (M) in the name of Margaret Beckett, and (O) in the name of Mr Marcus Fysh.

4.12 pm

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): I rise with the endorsement of the Father of the House, the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), for my motion (L)—for which I am grateful to him—and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Angus Brendan MacNeil), who has prosecuted the issue of revocation with such vigour in the House over the past few months. I am glad to say that my motion is supported by all parties in the House. It has the official backing of the Scottish National party, the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and the Independent Group. Many Labour Members have told me that they intend to support the motion, and I hope very much that the Labour party will reconsider its decision not to whip on it.

Angus Brendan MacNeil: Surely anyone who has said in the House “No to no deal” must support motion (L), because it gives a mechanism to that—namely, revocation.

Joanna Cherry: Absolutely. If there is one thing that we can achieve this afternoon by supporting this motion, it is categorically ruling out no deal. The motion is a revocation backstop. It stipulates that if within two days of exit day we have no agreed deal and Parliament does not positively approve no deal, the Government must revoke the article 50 notice, and we will stay in the EU. But it is important to understand that revocation does not mean that we could never notify the EU of our intention to leave again. That is incorrect, as Members will see if they read the decision of the Grand Chamber in the Court of Justice of the European Union on the case that I and others brought.

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): Will the hon. and learned Lady give way?

Joanna Cherry: I will in a moment, but I just want to make this clear: the motion has been carefully drafted by myself and a team of lawyers to give the Government a clear and unequivocal instruction, and it is the only way to make the Prime Minister hold to her promise that she gave this House on Monday when she said that “unless this House agrees to it, no deal will not happen”.—[*Official Report*, 25 March 2019; Vol. 657, c. 25.]

This motion would achieve that. It is the culmination of cross-party work that commenced with a group of Scottish parliamentarians, including myself and other SNP parliamentarians, two Scottish Greens and two Scottish Labour MEPs and the English QC Jo Maugham, who has helped me draft the amendment. We fought the British Government all the way to the Court of Justice to establish that if the United Kingdom got into the kind of mess we are now in, it would have the right to unilaterally revoke article 50. It is important that the instruction is clear and unequivocal, because if Parliament gives the Government a clear and unequivocal instruction then, if the Government fail to follow that clear and unequivocal instruction, because it is clear and unequivocal, we would have a range of political and legal remedies to make sure they did what the democratic vote of this House was to do.

Sammy Wilson: I thank the hon. and learned Lady for giving way. I wanted to give her an opportunity to correct something. She said this motion had all-party support; it does not have the support of the DUP because of course we believe that, through the referendum result, the people of the United Kingdom have said what they wish, and we do not want to revoke that decision.

Joanna Cherry: The right hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I sometimes forget that the DUP is not part of the Government, because it very much feels like that. I am very happy to say that I can live without the support of the DUP.

This is a cross-party motion, except for the DUP, and it continues the cross-party working which got the judgment from the Court of Justice; and today is about cross-party working to try to get us out of the mess we are in.

Lady Hermon *rose*—

Joanna Cherry: I am going to make some progress as I am very conscious of the time strictures.

Conservative Members of this House should support this motion because it is making good on the promise that their Prime Minister—she was still Prime Minister the last time I looked—made to the Commons earlier this week when she said that

“unless this House agrees to it, no deal will not happen”.—[*Official Report*, 25 March 2019; Vol. 657, c. 25.]

Labour MPs should support it because it fits with their manifesto. They said in their manifesto:

“Labour recognises that leaving the EU with ‘no deal’ is the worst possible deal for Britain and that it would do damage to our economy and trade. We will reject ‘no deal’ as a viable option”.

This motion is the only means today for Labour to fulfil that manifesto promise, and I know that the Labour party has repeatedly asked the Government to rule out no deal so I entreat them to support this motion today as the means of doing that.

Mr Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield) (Con) *rose*—

Joanna Cherry: I give way to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, who is a co-sponsor of the amendment.

Mr Grieve: I am grateful to the hon. and learned Lady. Does she agree that the point about this motion is that it is there in extremis? It is not there to summarily

[Mr Grieve]

revoke article 50, but only to do it in the event of circumstances where there is no alternative and no ability to get an extension that might deliver a referendum, for example, or some other conclusion.

Joanna Cherry: That is exactly so, and I am very grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for spelling that out so clearly and for lending his support to this motion.

Fellow Members can support this motion even if they are supporting other motions tonight. It should be acceptable to supporters of the current draft withdrawal agreement—for some reason that is not on the Order Paper today, but we might see it later in the week. If an hon. Member wished to support the Prime Minister's deal, they could also support my motion because it is a failsafe. If an hon. Member wished to support Norway-plus, they could also support my motion because it is a failsafe. And, very importantly, those of us who wish to support a people's vote can also support this because it is a failsafe. Also, it does not even preclude a general election, because the way the motion is worded makes it kick in on the penultimate day before exit day, which is of course a moving target at the moment; so it leaves the door open to a general election, which I know some of us would quite like to see, particularly the SNP in Scotland as we are riding so high in the opinion polls. But today is about cross-party working and democracy, because the decision that we are taking is of generational importance for the United Kingdom and it ought to be the representatives of the people of the United Kingdom in this House who decide between revocation and no deal, not the Prime Minister of a minority Government.

Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab): The hon. and learned Lady mentioned the spirit of cross-party working. She also asked about the Labour whipping arrangements, and I can assure her, as one of those who has signed her motion, that the Labour whip is not to oppose her motion. There is simply a recommendation to abstain, but I am sure that a number of my colleagues will be supporting it.

Joanna Cherry: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for clarifying that and for his support, but I am puzzled why Labour Members would be instructed to abstain on this motion, as it is the only means for them to fulfil their manifesto promise. However, I will leave that to Labour Members, who I am sure will have been receiving the same amount of lobbying as I have—

Mr Bradshaw: I am sorry if I was not clear. It is not an instruction; it is a recommendation. That is entirely different when it comes to whipping.

Joanna Cherry: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for clarifying that, and I feel more and more encouraged that many more Labour MPs will support the motion. I will not take up any more time; I simply want to thank all Members who have signed and supported my motion.

4.21 pm

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Stephen Barclay): As the Leader of the House set out earlier, the options that the House considers this evening

should be deliverable, but it is clear that a number of them fall short of that test—[*Interruption.*] Well, motions (H) and (O) are just two examples. As the shadow Secretary of State, the right hon. and learned Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer), said earlier, there are 47 Back Benchers wishing to speak, and he and I have had quite a few opportunities to debate these issues, so, like him, I will try to keep my comments short this afternoon.

I want to reaffirm that it remains the Government's priority to secure approval of the withdrawal agreement this week to allow us to leave the EU in an orderly fashion—while noting your earlier comments, Mr Speaker. It is only by doing this that we can be guaranteed to leave the EU on 22 May and not face a cliff edge in two weeks' time. To maximise our ability to secure that approval, the Government will later today table a motion for the House to sit this Friday. This will be taken as the last order of business tomorrow, and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will confirm the business for Friday in her business statement tomorrow morning. I appreciate that this might cause some inconvenience, but I hope that all Members will agree that it is better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.

Turning to the specific motions before the House, I shall start with motion (B), tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron), which seeks to leave on the basis of no deal. He will be aware that the House has already voted, on Wednesday 13 March, on leaving on a no-deal basis. It remains the Government's priority to have a deal and a trading relationship with the European Union, as was set out by the official leave campaign.

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): If it is the Government's position to ensure that the country does not leave without a deal, and if there is no way for the Prime Minister's deal to get through, given the Speaker's intervention, why will the Government not allow the motion tabled by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) to carry, to provide a revoke backstop and to guarantee that there cannot be a no-deal exit?

Stephen Barclay: I will come to the hon. and learned Lady's motion to revoke in due course. I will take the motions in the order that Mr Speaker selected them. Turning to motion (L) from the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West, which deals with revoking article 50 after a vote on no deal on the penultimate sitting day before exit day, it has long been the Government's policy not to revoke article 50, and that position remains the same.

Motion (D) comes from my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles). He is a good friend, and I know that he tabled it in the spirit of trying to seek a solution for the House, but the fact that the labelling of his suggestion has been through so many different terms—Norway for now, Norway, Canada, EEA-plus, Norway-plus—draws attention to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon South (Chris Philp), which is that there are several problems with the proposal. To take issue with two specific points, paragraph (1)(b) refers to

“continuing status as a party to the European Economic Area Agreement”,

but I gently say that that is factually incorrect. The United Kingdom is a member of the EEA only through its membership of the EU, and therefore—[*Interruption.*] My hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford shakes his head, but that is the clear position of Her Majesty's Government.

Nick Boles: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Stephen Barclay: Given that it is my hon. Friend, I will take one further intervention.

Nick Boles: I will be brief. My right hon. Friend is correct to say that this is a legally disputed point. There are lawyers who agree with him, but I can cite Sir Alan Dashwood, QC, the leading silk on EU law, and George Peretz, QC, the leading silk on EFTA law, who both disagree with him.

Stephen Barclay: As a former respected Minister, my hon. Friend will know that I am stating the clear position of the Government Law Officers. The same point also relates to the meat of motion (H), because line 5 states that we need to give notice to leave the EEA, which is not the case.

The second issue with motion (D) is that paragraph (1)(e) states that freedom of movement can be restricted to those “genuinely seeking work” or those with “sufficient resources”. Again, that is just incorrect. The existing position as a member of the EU28 is that controls can be put in place, but that has not happened because of how the UK operates. We do not have a registration or ID system or an insurance-based health system, so there are reasons why such controls are not used. With respect, the proposal is a fig leaf to disguise the fact that his solution requires the continuation of freedom of movement.

James Cartlidge: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Stephen Barclay: I am conscious that 47 Members want to speak, so I will press on. I am sure that we will have a further debate before too many days have passed.

Turning quickly to motion (J) in the name of the Father of the House, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), my concern is that it would open up a role for the courts given that it would be for them to adjudicate on whether the suggestion of a comprehensive UK-wide customs union has been met in our negotiating mandate.

Motion (O) is referred to by some hon. Friends as the Malthouse compromise—Malthouse plan B in this case—and it would involve paying for an implementation period. However, the EU's clear position is that that proposal would be regarded as the UK reneging on an agreed fair settlement, which it has repeatedly said it is unwilling to accept.

As for the flaws of motion (K) from the Leader of the Opposition, we have been around these houses so many times that we do not dwell on them. Paragraph (a)(iii) refers to “dynamic alignment” but we have already committed to temporary alignment when it comes to implementing EU workers' rights. Again, the motion also does not address the fact that the Opposition appear to accept the withdrawal agreement but seem reluctant to say so.

In conclusion, the motions before the House represent a range of suboptimal solutions that either do not deliver on the referendum result or do so in a way that

would not deliver the benefits of the Prime Minister's deal. That is why the deal remains the best method to deliver on the biggest vote in our history in a way that protects business and citizens' rights.

4.29 pm

Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab): Negotiations succeed when no one gets everything they want but everyone gets something they want, and I hope that is the spirit in which we can approach today's proceedings. This consultative process is too little and too late, but it is a lot better than carrying on as we were. We all owe a debt of gratitude to hon. and right hon. Members on both sides of the House who have striven to find proposals that could command wider support so that, finally, some alternative ideas are before the House, and I very much hope some common ground can be identified.

There is one vital thing that all these varied proposals have in common: not one of them reflects what the British people were told were the prospects before them when they cast their votes in 2016, and nor does the Prime Minister's package, although that is not on the Order Paper. These differences from what was said to be on offer are substantial. The one key element that figures in each and every one of the proposed alternatives is the matter of sovereignty. It is key because all these proposals, including the Prime Minister's, would mean that we follow EU laws and regulations without having any real say in their content.

In 1975, during the first referendum on our links with Europe, I campaigned against continuing those links, mainly because of the diminution of sovereignty they implied, but at least then we were not forfeiting sovereignty but sharing it. Today's proposals mean we stand to lose our voice, our vote and our veto. Successive British Governments have used voice, vote and, occasionally, veto to considerable effect. We already have special deals all over the place. We do not have to be in the euro and we do not have to be a member of the borderless Schengen area. And we have helped to shape agreements within the EU and, as an EU member, across the world.

School students across the world recently went on to the streets to campaign against the threat to life on this planet, including the threat to the continued existence of the human race. Within the EU, the UK has played a substantial role over the years, under successive Governments, in pursuing these issues, and it was experiencing the influence that we could and did wield internationally in this sphere that finally and wholeheartedly convinced me of the value of our EU membership.

The Prime Minister's deal and the various alternatives, one and all, surrender that shared sovereignty. They would make us rule takers without being, as we have been, influential rule makers. It is clear that many who voted leave have accepted the possible economic damage, of which they have been warned, as a price they are prepared to pay for the return of sovereignty, and I honour them for that stance, but sovereignty is not returning. In fact, we are sacrificing sovereignty for the sake of saying we are no longer a member of the EU. I recognise that such a deal may be all that is on offer, but to me it is inconceivable that its acceptance should be solely a matter for Members of this House. I genuinely have no idea what view the British people might take of these various compromises, and certainly many, including in this House, vehemently oppose their even being asked.

[Margaret Beckett]

Ever since the day of the second referendum result in 2016, a deluge of not only warnings but threats has come from those who take that view, forecasting unrest, civil disorder, greater division and a dramatic further reduction in the public's trust in politics. But I invite colleagues who determinedly resist a confirmatory vote to look starkly at the full implications of what they are saying. They are willing, some are determined, to vote to terminate our membership of the European Union even if it may now be against the wishes of the majority of the British people. Consider the possible consequences for trust in politics or for social peace if this House forces an outcome on the people of this country that they no longer desire—that really would be the undemocratic, establishment stitch-up of all time.

We have all heard people say that the deals now available are worse than the one we now have as EU members, and some still say that, nevertheless, they still wish to leave. My mother would have called that cutting off your nose to spite your face, but if that is still the view of the majority, so be it. But how, in all conscience, can we alone in this House force through such a decision on their behalf without allowing them any say as to whether that is still their view?

David Tredinnick (Bosworth) (Con): Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Margaret Beckett: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

As with the Good Friday agreement, whatever emerges from these complex negotiations, the outcome should go back to the people for confirmation. The people started this process. They set a desired goal. It has proved far more difficult and tortuous than predicted, but we will now soon have a potential outcome. It is the people who should choose whether, on the terms now on offer, they still wish to proceed. Theirs should be the final decision on this, which is the first stage only of our withdrawal from the EU. With a clear conscience, I can look my constituents in the eye and tell them that that is the outcome that this House has secured. The European Union needs reform. Britain could play a key role in shaping it or we can just walk away and live with the consequences. But it is the British people who should now decide what comes next.

4.36 pm

George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth) (Con): I rise in support of motion (H), which stands in my name. It involves leaving the European Union but rejoining the European Free Trade Association and relying on our existing rights under the treaty establishing the European economic area. It differs from the “Common market 2.0” proposal in a couple of important areas. First, it does not envisage the need for a customs union. Secondly, it does not necessarily require the existing withdrawal agreement that the Prime Minister has been putting to this House.

I had a pretty good innings as agriculture Minister. Indeed, three months ago, after a reshuffle in Luxembourg, I became, for a short time, the longest serving agriculture Minister in Europe. In my five and a half years, I attended the AgriFish Council on a monthly basis, discussing all sorts of obscure and technical issues. I saw 10 EU presidencies come and go. Each came in

with its list of priorities and each went out lamenting the fact that little had been achieved. I recall one occasion, before Italy was commencing its presidency, when the Italian Minister cast aside the notes his officials had given him and simply said, “We will talk about the usual stuff and probably not get much done.”

I have three observations that my experience has given me that I would like to highlight, because they underpin the approach I have suggested. First, we must recognise that the European Union moves at glacial pace; it is not agile. It makes tiny, incremental changes and takes years to do so; I remember arguing for three or four years about something as simple as changes to organic food labelling. Secondly, the EU does not really follow national democracies; it sees what happens in national democracy as a national issue and a national problem. The European institutions live by their treaties and the letter of the words in them. Finally, decades of EU membership has engendered a particular type of culture among our negotiators and our civil service. I have huge admiration for our civil service but, undoubtedly, a qualified majority voting system is all about trying to get something rather than be willing to walk away from the table. That is why in both the negotiation that David Cameron had and the current negotiation officials would often come back claiming that things are “not negotiable”. Therefore, the simple proposition behind motion (H) is that, rather than wade through the treacle and try to negotiate a bespoke deal from scratch, knowing the nature of European institutions, why not instead use existing treaty rights as our starting point and allow things to evolve from that point?

The UK is a signatory to the treaty that established the European economic area in 1994, and it had that role because at that point the EU had no legal personality. At times, as the Secretary of State repeated today, the Government have adopted a political line to take, claiming that our EEA membership automatically falls away when we leave the European Union. That claim is wrong in law. A year ago, I was in Oslo, and at that time our ambassador to Norway was on standby, having been ordered by the Foreign Office to deliver a letter to give notice under article 127 of the EEA treaty, although in the event the Foreign Office chose not to. In 2017, during a judicial review hearing, Sir James Eadie, QC, no less than the counsel representing the Government, made exactly the reverse claim: he claimed that we had not taken the decision to leave the EEA, and in his submission to the court he claimed it is not true that our membership of the EEA automatically falls away with our membership of the European Union.

It is either the case that the Government—advised, I am sure, by Government Law Officers—have been repeatedly wrong at the Dispatch Box, or it is the case that they did not give a true account of their understanding of the law to a court. Having talked to several lawyers who understand these things, my understanding is that we are indeed a signatory to the EEA and that our rights and obligations remain intact. It is simply the case that to make those rights and obligations operable, we have either to be in the EU pillar of that agreement, as we are now, or to switch to the EFTA pillar.

Under international law, both the European Union and the EFTA states are under an obligation to make treaties work and to work with any consequential changes to a treaty that might be required to ensure that it is

operable. An application to join EFTA cannot be unreasonably refused. Indeed, in my discussions with both Iceland and Norway, they made it clear that they would not stand in the way of such an option.

The EFTA option is sometimes described as the Norway option, but it has a very British pedigree. Sixty years ago, in 1959, Members in this House debated the establishment of the European Free Trade Association. When there was a cross-party consensus that the political and democratic costs of joining the then European Economic Community were too great, it was this House that forged ahead to build an alliance of countries, including not only Norway but Portugal, Austria, Sweden and others, to form the European Free Trade Association. The idea was supported by both Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson. Would it really be such a bad thing to return to that model, given that we were the godfather of the European Free Trade Association?

In conclusion, the benefits of the approach I have set out are that we can get things done quickly. We can join the EFTA surveillance system within three months and have full EFTA membership within six months. We would have a ready-made free trade agreement. We would be outside the customs union and would have an independent trade policy, and we would have control of our fishing grounds again and an independent agriculture policy. We would become an independent country again.

4.43 pm

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): Is there not something really quite liberating about the debate we are having? The normal atmosphere and structure, with propositions from one side or the other, have all disappeared as the House of Commons has taken control of this really important discussion about how we are going to take our country forward. Another striking thing is that every single Member who has spoken in support of a proposition has not sought to rubbish the other propositions; they have put their case in an effort to win support from across the House. If that is not confirmation of the wisdom of the House's having taken control—I do not like that phrase because I think it is the House doing its job—to allow us to do that, I do not know what is.

I will make two points. First, I will vote for the customs union motion moved by the Father of the House, which everyone in the Chamber knows is an essential building block to make any progress towards achieving the two objectives set by the Prime Minister: keeping an open border and at the same time keeping friction-free trade moving to oil the wheels of our industry. I will also vote for the common market 2.0 proposal, although, like many others, I note the difference between, on the one hand, a customs union and, on the other, a customs arrangement. It is a compromise proposal, but I will support it.

I will also vote for the confirmatory referendum. I thought we heard an absolutely outstanding speech from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett). I will vote for it as someone who, for a long time, has not argued for a people's vote, but I want to explain why I have come to the conclusion that a confirmatory referendum is the only way forward. In essence, it is because things have changed. The proposition put before the British people by the leave campaign during the referendum—that one did not

have to choose between our sovereignty, on the one hand, and the economic health of the country on the other—has proven to be false.

David Tredinnick: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Hilary Benn: I will not because many people want to speak. I hope the hon. Gentleman will forgive me.

The anger expressed by some Members towards the Prime Minister's deal is in part revealing. The truth is that there is a choice to be made. The suggestion that we could have all the things that we wanted without anything that we did not has proven not to be the case. If things have changed, should we not therefore ask the people?

Secondly, the Government changed their mind originally on whether the House would have a meaningful vote. The Government said at one point that there would be an enormous row about the structure of the negotiations and then changed their mind and accepted the way in which the European Union wanted to conduct them. The Government have come back once already, and may well this week come back again, in an attempt to persuade us to change our minds about the withdrawal agreement and the political declaration. The first holder of the post of Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union changed his mind about supporting the deal. There are reports that the hon. Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg) may be in the process of changing his mind as well. The Prime Minister said 108 times that we would definitely leave on 29 March, but she changed her mind and we are not.

Why is it that the only people in this debate apparently not allowed to be asked whether they have changed their minds are the British people? How can that be democratic? If Members agree that it is not, I hope very much that they will vote for motion (M) tonight.

4.48 pm

Mr Marcus Fysh (Yeovil) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn). However, let us actually remember the people in all this. They voted two years ago to leave the European Union and then they voted in an election in which we stood on a manifesto saying that we would leave the European Union and its two main pillars, the single market and the customs union, which are integral to what the European Union is. They want their instruction to be carried out now. To be honest, I think it is quite shameful to call for a second referendum before the result of the first has even been implemented.

Let me discuss what the reality would be if we went down the road of participation in the single market and customs union, which most of these motions are trying to implement, even as we leave, in contravention of our manifesto commitments and the referendum result. Those options would effectively give away our trade policy and the control of regulation in our own country, both of which are valuable to our economy, our future as a nation and our children.

With respect, many people do not quite understand what being in a customs union, rather than being in the customs union of the European Union, would actually entail. Many people think that it would allow frictionless trade, but that is not correct. It would mean that we would have to implement a system of movement certificates

[Mr Marcus Fysh]

and export declarations. It would not take away the need for border formalities and the recording of goods moving across borders.

Anna Soubry: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Fysh: I am not going to give way because I know that a lot of people want to speak.

In a customs union, we would not be in control of various aspects of the process. We would not be in control of the conditions of the border formalities, nor of the tariffs collected. For example, if goods were coming to our market via Rotterdam, the tariffs on those imports—effectively to us—would be collected and kept in the European Union. A customs union would not give us control over our money, our trading partners' access to our market, or our traders' access to our trading partners' markets. It really is inconceivable that we should even be considering any recognisable description of a permanent customs union as a feature of leaving the EU. That is one reason that people outside this place are quite confused by some of the suggestions that the House has been coming up with.

Many of the single market and customs union proposals on the table tonight would not obviate the need for a backstop in the withdrawal agreement, so the problems of the withdrawal agreement highlighted by some Conservative Members and others would remain anyway. There is the problem of being hostage to fortune within the further negotiation of how these customs union or single market arrangements might work. For example, exemptions on fishing and other matters would still be up for negotiation, as we heard earlier, but we would be in a relatively weak position in those negotiations. Defence manufacturing would be prejudiced by the backstop, should we end up having to go into it. The same is true for agriculture, as the restrictions on state aid for our agriculture, while the EU is allowed to subsidise its agriculture, would still remain. The issue of Northern Ireland—what happens to Northern Ireland should we not be able to agree—would still remain. I do not really see those motions as solutions. It is also possible, to come to the circumstances of my motion—

Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The hon. Gentleman has been on his feet for five minutes, but he has not yet had an opportunity to tell us why we should vote for his motion. Would you encourage him to tell us about motion (O), rather than what is wrong with all the other motions?

Mr Speaker: Yes, and it would be best if the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr Fysh) would expedite the process in the light of the number of colleagues who wish to contribute.

Mr Fysh: That is exactly what I was getting to. Motion (O) is about what happens in the circumstances that we cannot agree a withdrawal agreement for one reason or another, and there are a host of circumstances where that might occur. The European Union might not want to do that. It might not want to extend; all sorts of different permutations could have an impact. I do not think that this House is going to revoke article 50, because that really would be a finger in the eye to the

public, so we need to have a plan B. This sets out a plan B arrangement—a contingency arrangement. It is, in essence, a two-year stop-gap arrangement to facilitate trade and allow space for our longer-term negotiation to take place. It consists, in effect, of having a trade preference with no tariffs and no quantitative restrictions, with mutual recognition of standards and conformity assessment. It involves having a customs arrangement but one that consists of advance trade facilitation measures. We are prepared to pay money for that and to agree potentially other measures that are within the withdrawal agreement; the EU will no doubt want to try to agree some of the things, such as on geographical indications, that we have agreed.

This is a practical approach and a compromise that was discussed in the Malthouse process, showing what to do as a back-up if we cannot get anything else done. It is a very fair settlement. It does involve money, contrary to what the Secretary of State said. We know that EU business wants to trade with us. We now know that the EU and Ireland have no intention of putting up a hard border. I have no doubt that they have seen the alternative arrangements that we have proposed and that that is how they would want to implement things. So that is how we are going to do this.

This is simple to agree. It does not prejudice the future relationship with the EU, so we can keep talking about that. It is pro-trade and pro-business with the EU as well as the rest of the world. It honours the referendum and our manifesto. I commend it to the House.

4.56 pm

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): I apologise to hon. and right hon. Members, but given the time constraints I will not extend the usual courtesy of taking interventions.

I am particularly pleased to be participating in this debate, because today we can start to bring an end to the chaos. Parliament has taken back control because this Tory Government and this Prime Minister are out of control. Scotland did not ask for this crisis; nobody asked for this chaos. Of course, Scotland voted to remain in the EU. We voted overwhelmingly to protect our economy and the freedoms and the values that the European Union gives to the people of Scotland. Scotland is a European country; historically, we have been a European country. Economically, socially and culturally, we benefit from our membership.

Today the SNP laid a motion to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard, because Scotland's wishes have been completely ignored during the Brexit process. This is in stark contrast to the European Union, which seeks consensus and fosters collaboration through its institutions and throughout the Community. It is a partnership of equals, in stark contrast to this place, where there is no equality of respect for the devolved institutions. That lack of appreciation of how the UK should work post-devolution will haunt this place. Increasingly, those living in Scotland will reflect on the way that we are treated in this Union—the United Kingdom. It is most certainly not the partnership of equals that the Prime Minister had promised us. It is one where we are told, quite simply, that our votes do not count, where we can be stripped of our European citizenship—and for what?—and where we will pay a price economically, socially and culturally.

The facts are clear—Brexit will rob Scotland of jobs. It will rob our economy of talented workers that our public sector needs. It will steal opportunities to travel and learn from our EU partners from future generations. It will divide relationships—families and friendships. There is no such thing as a good Brexit, and it must be stopped. We must act to protect the interests of our citizens, of our communities, and of our nations. Today is the opportunity—perhaps the only opportunity.

Today in the European Parliament, my friend and colleague, Alyn Smith MEP, asked Europe to keep a light on for Scotland to show us the way home. I want the EU to keep a light on for Scotland. As Members of Parliament, we must decide: can we follow that light, or is the United Kingdom heading into the darkness? Scotland will not follow the UK into that darkness if the UK fails to change course. We can and will follow the light, to allow Scotland to become an independent country in the European Union.

I want to make it clear that tonight the Scottish National party will vote for our preferred options on the Order Paper. We will vote for a second EU referendum, and we will vote for motions to revoke article 50, as revocation may be our only option to get out of this mess. Those options must remain on the table. The Scottish Parliament will vote today to endorse revocation in the event of no deal. We expect that to be backed on a cross-party basis, and, I say to friends and colleagues, that includes the Labour party. Revoke must be an option. I therefore ask Members to support motion (L), tabled by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry).

Let me speak to some of the other motions. We on the SNP Benches would like to seek clarity from the official Opposition about their motion. For Scotland, freedom of movement without any caveats is essential, not just in principle but for the sake of our nation's prosperity. Can those on the Labour Front Bench confirm that their motion protects and continues the policy of freedom of movement in full?

I turn to motion (D), in the name of the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles). Let me be clear: the SNP does not and will not endorse the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement. The agreement Bill requires the consent of the Scottish Parliament, and the UK Government have already broken that process. The people of Scotland voted to remain, and as I noted in my remarks on the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, freedom of movement is essential for the SNP. Our nation's future and our public services depend on it. We must have total confidence that in any Norway-plus proposal, the freedom of movement that we currently benefit from will continue and we will have access to the single market and customs union in full.

We have further questions regarding the proposals of the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford for a customs arrangement and the prospect of alternative arrangements to ensure frictionless trade. I hear his assurance on freedom of movement, and we will not oppose his motion, but it will certainly be difficult for us to support it, particularly as remain is the option that we demand.

Let me make it clear: the SNP wants to find a way forward. Our preferred option is to remain in the European Union—that is what Scotland voted for—and as long as that is an option, we will vote for it, but we have

always said that if it proves not to be possible, we will seek compromise to protect Scotland's interests. We have set out previously what compromise is for us—and remember, that would be compromise from a position where the country we represent did not vote for Brexit and our national Parliament is opposed to Brexit.

That compromise, endorsed by the Scottish Parliament, is “Scotland's Place in Europe”. Published in December 2016 and ignored by the UK Government, it proposes full membership of the European single market and the customs union, but that position is not encapsulated yet in any of the proposals put forward tonight. Our compromise requires full acceptance of freedom of movement and respect for the position of the Scottish Parliament and for devolution as a whole. We have put forward that compromise time and again for more than two years, but it has continually been ignored. While we know that some Members agree with us in principle, there is more work to be done by those on the Labour and Tory Benches to get to a position that we could accept, if we cannot put this matter back to the people or choose to remain in the EU.

When I look at the Order Paper, I see that there is space to compromise; there is a better way out of this mess. On Saturday, more than 1 million people marched to ask that they get the chance to vote on their future within the European Union. I was proud to stand with them alongside our First Minister. People from all parts of the United Kingdom now know the price that will be paid for Brexit—economic disaster—and they want another say. Member across the House may feel some discomfort or unease about a second EU referendum, but what is more respectful to the electorate, when this place has repeatedly failed, than giving them back control? There is nothing to fear. The Prime Minister does not have support for her deal, and this House has not found a solution, so let us do the right thing and end this stalemate by letting the people decide. I urge Members to join the SNP, compromise at this critical hour and vote for a motion to hold a second EU referendum.

In conclusion, the UK Government are flogging a dead horse, running down the clock and hoping that the squeeze of time will bring support for the Prime Minister's devastating deal. We can end this today: we can take back control and stop the Prime Minister. We can show leadership and maturity. The people want it. Let us do the right thing, and find consensus to protect the interests of all our citizens.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr Speaker: Order. A five-minute limit on Back-Bench speeches must now apply with immediate effect.

5.5 pm

Nicky Morgan (Loughborough) (Con): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for calling me to speak in this important, groundbreaking and unprecedented debate. I was pleased to be one of the 30 Conservative MPs who helped to secure this debate. I am sorry that it is happening in a way, but the fact that it is happening shows, unfortunately, that the Government's strategy for getting the withdrawal agreement through this House has not succeeded so far. To be clear, I will vote for that withdrawal agreement if and when it is re-presented to the House, because I think it is the best way for us to leave the EU in an orderly fashion as soon as that is practicable.

[Nicky Morgan]

I would have spoken to amendment (N), standing in my name and those of other right hon. and hon. Members, but obviously it has not been selected. However, a word at the top of that motion has been used several times. It was used by the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock), and it was used by the SNP leader here, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford), who has just spoken, although I am not entirely sure that what he asked people to do would fulfil its strictures. The word is “compromise”, and it is an action that absolutely needs to be practised by Members on both sides of the House if today—and potentially Monday—is going to have an effect.

The point is that right hon. and hon. Members should be voting today for what they could countenance, not their preferred option. If we stay in our silos and our trenches, as I have spoken about before, we as a House will not find our way through this, and we will unfortunately fulfil what the Prime Minister said last week, which is that this House cannot find a way through. I think we will not have done our job as parliamentary representatives if that is the case.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) is not in his place. In relation to common market 2.0—I will support that proposal tonight—he talked about a customs union and customs arrangements. One of the advantages of having been involved in the Malthouse compromise talks is that I know that alternative arrangements can be secured to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland. What we want on that border is no physical infrastructure, with no customs formalities at the border. With five key changes—there is not time to talk about them today, but there may be in future debates, and I am very happy to talk to any right hon. and hon. Members about those key changes—it would be possible to negotiate such arrangements.

The Leader of the House has talked about any solution being deliverable and negotiable, and having alternative arrangements to avoid the need to be in a customs union is both deliverable and negotiable, because we know the EU has already conceded the principle of them. In the documents tabled by the Government on 11 March, before the last meaningful vote, the EU has clearly said that such negotiations on those arrangements should commence immediately.

Mr Speaker, I heard earlier your strictures to the Government about the test that has to be met for the withdrawal agreement to be brought back to this House. You want to see significant change, and one way of achieving such significant change would be to allow the UK and the EU time to negotiate those alternative arrangements and put them into the withdrawal agreement so that the backstop is superseded. Looking at the names of those who have signed motion (N), we can see that there are Members of this House who are ready to sign up to that as a principle.

In my previous life as a solicitor negotiating mergers and acquisitions deals, I spent many a less-than-happy hour locked in meeting rooms with fellow lawyers and clients and, frankly, we just did not leave until the deal had been done. That needs to happen now to get the backstop replaced and the alternative arrangements secured if that is what Members want.

I will vote for any option that gives a negotiated settlement and leads to an orderly exit from the EU. The question for the House, which may arise after Monday—we shall have to see—is what the Government's response is and how any Government will implement what the House may have identified as a way forward. There may well be difficult decisions for the Government, but also for the House, about the form of the Government who will take that forward. Will we need even greater cross-party working to arrive at a solution and a Government who can negotiate the outcome with the EU?

Although today is an important step forward, it is really only the start of the process of arriving at a compromise. I entirely agree with the Chairman of the Brexit Committee, who said that we should have started this process two years ago. The country, Parliament and the Government would be in a much happier place.

5.10 pm

Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab): The debate is proving to be thoughtful and considered. It is the debate that we should have had two years ago. There was an appetite from all parts of the House and from all different perspectives to have such a debate more than two years ago. There was also a spirit across the House—among those who voted leave and those who voted remain—to come together and find a way to make the process work. It is why so many Members from all parts of the House voted for article 50, but also put forward proposals through Select Committees and different debates, and wanted the chance to table amendments. That is why I called for a cross-party commission to oversee the negotiations from the very beginning. Sadly, that did not happen and the Prime Minister did not want to do things that way. That is why we are in this terrible mess and our constituents are tearing their hair out. Whether they voted leave or remain, people are feeling deeply frustrated and let down.

Just as our constituents—employers and trade unions, neighbours and friends, different parts of communities—come together to compromise and sort things out, it is our responsibility to do that now. The proposal to hold indicative votes was important. We will all have to compromise and vote for motions, parts of which we do not necessarily agree with. We might not agree with every single bit of a motion or an idea, but we might think there is the basis for finding some form of compromise.

When the CBI, which represents 190,000 British businesses, and the TUC, which represents 5.6 million British workers, come together to describe a national emergency, there is a responsibility on us to act. They spoke with other members of a national industrial coalition in Parliament this morning, in a meeting that the right hon. Member for Meriden (Dame Caroline Spelman) and my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Jack Dromey) called. They said that a plan B that protects workers, the economy and an open Irish border, commands a parliamentary majority, and is negotiable with the EU must be found. That is why I have put my name to the customs union motion. I have called for that from the beginning and I think it can be the basis of finding consensus and building agreement.

Businesses in our area—our big manufacturers, Burberry and Haribo; local retailers and distributors such as Asda and Teva; small businesses and traders, farmers

and florists—have all warned that they need a deal that avoids border delays, tariffs or extra customs bureaucracy. It is why we heard from the motor manufacturers, the National Farmers Union and the aerospace sector in the meeting this morning. They all called for a customs union, which is at the heart of Labour motion (K) on an alternative Brexit approach. It is also why the TUC argued for the importance of the common market 2.0 approach.

In the motions and in points that Members of all parties have made, there is a range of options that we should consider and that mean we can continue to oppose the chaos of no deal, which would be deeply damaging to all our constituents. I keep very much in mind the words of a friend in Pontefract, who I talked to last week. He is waiting for radiotherapy but does not know whether the treatment will be delayed because no deal could put at risk the supply of the short-life isotopes that are needed for radiotherapy. In his interests and those of patients in all our constituencies, as well as constituents who could be hit by higher food, fuel and utilities prices in the event of a chaotic no deal, we must continue to argue against it.

I take a different approach from that suggested by motion (L), because I think that in those circumstances we should argue for more time with the European Union to try to get a resolution and, frankly, to sort things out.

Whatever the outcome today and on Monday, we are going to have to do two things that the Government have fundamentally failed to do—get clarity on what Brexit means and build consensus. We are talking about constitutional change, and nothing lasts without consensus. On Scottish and Welsh devolution, consensus was built and it lasted. On the Lisbon and Maastricht treaties, consensus was not built and support for them has not endured. The same is true in this situation. Unless clear consensus can be built, public consent or a public vote will be needed through a general election or referendum; otherwise it will not last. It is in all of our interests to build consensus, come together and do what we should have done two years ago.

5.15 pm

Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con): I plan to be uncompromising in my opposition to motions (M) and (L), and then, without a hint of hypocrisy, argue for compromise for where we end up.

We have heard a lot recently about marches. The only march that I am interested in is the march of my constituents to vote in the 2016 referendum, as they were asked to do by this Parliament, and to decide for a final time whether we should remain a member of the European Union. We were promised by both sides of the campaign that the decision of the people would be implemented—that is what both the remain and the leave sides said.

The remain side spent the whole campaign telling voters how terribly complex and difficult leaving the European Union was going to be, and yet people still went out to vote, many for the first time in my constituency. I had people stopping me on referendum day, saying, “How do I vote? Where do I go? I want to express my opinion on this question, which Parliament has told me is mine to make and will be implemented.” Now, just because some Members do not like the decision—or,

rather, because we have messed up the whole process of leaving—it is completely unacceptable to turn around, go back to those people and say, “We’ve made such a terrible mess of it that we’re going to go back on all of those promises.”

I am appalled at the way in which many of my voters—70% of them went out and voted leave—have been belittled and besmirched since they took the decision they were asked to make. Their age has been made an issue; how, in a democracy, can age be an issue as to how valuable someone’s vote is? Their educational standards have been made an issue—apparently, whether someone has a degree or not places some sort of value on their vote. They have been told that they live in the wrong part of the country and that they have views that they do not have—people have told them why it is that they took the democratic decision that they had every right to take and that they were promised by this House and by both sides of the campaign would be implemented.

Graham Stringer (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab)
rose—

Andrew Percy: I am not going to give way, because I want to stick to the five-minute limit.

It would be appalling to go back and hold a second referendum. A constituent contacted me the other day and said, “Why is it, in this matter of the European Union, that remain has to win only once but leave has to win twice for our decision to be implemented?” What am I meant to say to them? Yes, the issue is complicated and difficult. Some people in this place may even have deliberately made it more complicated than it needed to be so that they could be proven right. Certainly, there has been incompetence that has made it more difficult than it should have been, and I will not say where that incompetence has necessarily come from. It would be appalling to go back to constituents.

I also think it would unleash something pretty dangerous. I am saddened by how certain elements at the extremes of the political sphere have tried to take hold of the issue for their own particular, disgusting brand of politics, which I want nothing to do with. There is no doubt that those people would play a bigger role in a second referendum. It would divide the country, but for what purpose? Current polling shows that it might reverse the result. I think that this is a very dangerous thing that this House should avoid at all costs.

I do not have time to say a great deal about the idea of revocation, which has been suggested by the SNP. I do wonder what its response would have been had it been successful in the Scottish referendum and this House had then decided that it knew better and revoked the result.

Now to the compromise, Mr Speaker. Since I came to this place, my views on Europe have not changed. Some of my colleagues have moved into positions I cannot get my head around, but we need to bring this to a conclusion. We need to do that through a process of compromise. There is a lot in the Prime Minister’s deal I do not like, but I have voted for it and will continue to vote for it. I put my name to the amendments for common market 2.0 and for EFTA. I have concerns about free movement, because some of my constituents clearly have very strong views on that, but this is a way in which we can come together. We can accept the result of the referendum, which was people saying very definitely that they do not

[Andrew Percy]

like the political institutions of the European Union. There is a way through this, so the House should look very closely at the propositions on common market 2.0 and EFTA. I will be supporting them. I will be voting for every leave option this evening, because I just want to get this damn thing over with and resolved in line with what my constituents voted for in 2016.

My final comment is this. I hope that we will—I have been a big supporter of yours in the Chair, Mr Speaker—have the opportunity to again vote on the Prime Minister's deal. I do think that this is an important way of trying to bring this to a close.

5.20 pm

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab): I do not agree with much of what the hon. Member for Brigg and Goole (Andrew Percy) said, apart from when he said that it should be a priority to get this damn thing over. He made a fair point there.

Today has been a difficult day, but we are all here with the best of intentions: to seek to represent the interests of our constituents and to do right by our consciences. I want to support all Members who are speaking in this debate and all who will participate in this process. They are trying to express what they feel to be best for our country and we must pay due respect to everybody in this debate.

That said, however, I think that this process, innovative though it may be, does represent failure. The fact that we are here is a failure of any party to win the 2017 general election with a clear mandate from the British public as to what Brexit would mean. It is a failure of the response to that general election to be a cross-party agreement about what Brexit would mean that we could all stand by and support. What we are in the business of here is trying to put options before the Government, and demonstrating support for those options and asking them to think again about how they form a coalition of support for the future course in this House.

That brings me to motion (D) on the EEA customs union. Last June, I voted for an EEA-type Brexit. I rebelled against my party's Whip to do so and I remain glad about that. If we are to Brexit, I think that that is probably the most tolerable form. However, I have a couple of concerns with motion (D). First, we heard from the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) about this issue of whether the customs union would be permanent or whether it would be in pursuit of alternative arrangements. I am sorry to disagree with my colleague the Chair of the Treasury Committee, the right hon. Member for Loughborough (Nicky Morgan). She and I agree on a great number of things, but I just do not agree that alternative arrangements exist. Therefore, that is not enough for me.

Sir Oliver Letwin *rose*—

Alison McGovern: I will not give way, because I do not want to try Mr Speaker's patience, but I wish the right hon. Gentleman well in the process that he has created.

For those who voted leave, too, I worry that a policy compromise is not where they are at. I do not think that the EEA idea, which many of us pursued and voted for previously, is really what people think will be Brexit.

That is partly because of the tone of this debate, but also because those who voted leave do not really accept it as Brexit. I worry about our ability to sell it to them. But I do wish it well, because it is an option that I think could have been, once, a compromise.

That leads me to the following conclusion. Do we need a policy compromise or do we need a process compromise? I have concluded that it is not a policy, but a process compromise that will bring people together. I think the only thing left is to find a reasonable, tolerable and acceptable form of Brexit and ask for it to be ratified by the British public, if they wish to. Those of us who remain confident in the value of our European Union citizenship will campaign for the status quo and those who wish to campaign for Brexit can do so, but I think that the only way to deal with this mess is to find that tolerable form of Brexit and ask the British public if that was what they meant by leaving the European Union. As I said, those of us who still believe in the idea of a European Union that would lift all, include all and create peace in our continent will campaign for that principle.

5.25 pm

Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Wirral South (Alison McGovern). I am going to speak on the perhaps narrow but extremely important topic of the customs union. I will speak specifically against motions (J), in the name of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), and (K), in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, and what I believe to be the seriously defective proposal of a customs union with the European Union while we would not have a seat at the table.

I have given this question a great deal of consideration over the last almost three years, particularly in my two years spent at the Department for International Trade in charge of trade policy. A customs union has its superficial temptations. Obviously, it keeps trade close, although, it is worth pointing out, not necessarily frictionless; we would need the single market as well for that. It avoids having to agree to free movement, it may not need financial contributions, and clearly, it is likely to provide short-term relief for industrial supply chains, but it would be a historic mistake.

Customs unions have been successful in history, but essentially, for countries going in the opposite direction—for countries coming together into a political union. Look at the history of the Zollverein in Germany in the 19th century, which was all part of the process of German unification. Look at the partial customs union, in the name of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1947 or 1949—I forget which—which was a precursor to the EEC and the treaty of Rome. However, we are heading in the opposite direction. This is the wrong compromise, and a customs union would give short-term relief at the cost of long-term pain and a democratic deficit that would grow and grow over the years. I have written articles about this, notably today in *The Times* Red Box.

Our trade policy would end up being set by others and that would be a historic mistake. I will give four or five quick examples of where this would have a really serious impact on this country. Tariff policy, for example, would be set by the European Union to protect its

products from others coming in and it would not be set in the interests of the UK, which are likely to be different. For example, in the current trade dispute between the United States and the European Union, there are punitive tariffs on bourbon coming into this country. Let us say that there is a future trade dispute between the EU and the US involving Scotch whisky. Obviously, that is not produced in the European Union and there would be no incentive for the EU in that customs union to seek to defend Scotch whisky.

On trade agreements, we have talked before about the Turkey trap. Essentially, if the EU entered into a trade agreement with a third country and the UK were in a customs union, we would have to offer access to our markets but we would not get the reciprocal access to that country in return. That would be a massive democratic deficit. It amazes me that it is the official Labour policy to do this. I remember well the disputes around the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The biggest objections to TTIP came from the Labour side. Now we have a situation where trade policy will be determined by others without even a UK seat at the table. If Labour thought at the time, when we had a seat at the table, that TTIP would lead to US private healthcare companies gaining access to the NHS, what will it be like when we do not have a seat at the table? But that is the official Labour policy.

On trade remedies, I am amazed that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central (Gareth Snell) has put his name to one of these motions. It is absolutely incredible. Trade remedies would be conducted by the EU, not this country. They are currently conducted by the EU, but we have a seat at the Trade Council—I was at that seat for a long time—and participate in trade remedies to defend our products. There is no guarantee—in fact, it is highly unlikely—that the EU would do the same, particularly for a product not produced in the EU. When it comes to doing WTO-compliant studies of products, we can guarantee that the studies that would take priority would be those defending the interests of EU members, not those of non-members. I find it amazing.

Finally, on trade preferences and access to the developing world, I find it staggering that the Labour party is proposing ceding control over trade preferences to Brussels without the UK having a seat at the table. That would be unacceptable to my constituents and, I believe, to theirs.

5.30 pm

Kate Hoey (Vauxhall) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Chelsea and Fulham (Greg Hands), who was a brilliant Trade Minister and resigned on a matter of principle. We here should all remember our principles.

There is an air of almost self-satisfaction and self-congratulation in the House today, as if somehow this is wonderful. I think the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) called it a wonderful freedom. I actually feel very sad about today. We should not be in this position. I could spend the next five minutes talking about who to blame, but there is not much point. We are where we are.

The one group of people we cannot blame, however, are the people of this country who in the referendum voted to leave, thought they would be listened to and

were told by everyone, including the former Prime Minister, that their vote mattered and would be implemented, whatever that decision. Since that day, many people in this House who never wanted us to leave have done all they can in very clever ways—an hon. Member said she had been helped by a senior lawyer to put her motion—to prevent us from leaving.

The public looking in today would say, “What a nonsense. It’s just a lot of waffle. You’re just putting through loads of different things.” In the end, only the Government can make this happen. The Prime Minister could still get her withdrawal agreement through, if she was to recognise that she as a Conservative and Unionist Prime Minister should never have come up with something like the backstop and that the backstop has to be changed. I understand that fundamentally.

The one thing that must not happen today is the people of this United Kingdom being told, “You were too stupid, racist or ignorant to vote the right way, and now we want you to vote again in a separate referendum, because we think you might have changed your mind.” I am incredibly disappointed that my party—a Labour party that saw the majority of its constituencies vote to leave—is whipping Labour Members to vote for a second referendum.

Angus Brendan MacNeil: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Kate Hoey: I am not giving way to the hon. Member.

It is outrageous. Labour supporters and voters who came back to Labour and voted Labour, having dallied with UKIP for a while and believing that Labour meant what it said, would see it as a huge betrayal.

Graham Stringer: I agree with the thrust of my hon. Friend’s argument. Does she agree that the argument being put in the Chamber today that we should give people a second vote because they have changed their mind would lead to a “neverendum”—people could change their mind every year, though all the polling evidence, as presented by John Curtice, is that they have not changed their mind—and that about 98% of the people promoting a second referendum are remainers?

Kate Hoey: My hon. Friend is quite right. On that basis, we would have to have general elections practically every month. Some people might change their minds the day after they voted. We cannot go down the road.

I have a big remain constituency, but I have made very clear from day one—and I shall have been in this place for 30 years in June—that I want us to get out of the EU. Everyone has known my views, so I have no apology to make for campaigning to leave. A constituent wrote to me saying that he had thought that the manifestos of the Labour party and Conservative party—the two main parties—had said, “We will implement the result of the referendum.” There is nothing difficult about the word “leave”. It is very simple. Members have deliberately made it difficult here.

My constituent wrote:

“Can we the electorate now expect that anything promised in a manifesto is to be honoured, that it should be written into law, that, if you promise a course of action, you must follow through and make it happen.”

Why, he asked, do party leaders order three-line whips so that what they promised in the manifesto can be reneged on?

[Kate Hoey]

I think that we are in a very dangerous situation in the House. We are trying to thwart the will of the people, but democracy cannot be compromised. Outside, there is huge anger. We may not see it here in London, particularly in areas where there was a large remain vote, but there is huge anger elsewhere, and it is growing. We have backed ourselves into a hole, and now the only way out is for us either to leave with a World Trade Organisation agreement, or to find a way in which the withdrawal agreement can be changed so that we can accept it—and that means that there must be a change in the backstop.

Nearly all the motions involve compromise. I make no apology for saying that I do not think we should be compromising with the electorate. I mean no criticism of you, Mr Speaker, but it is very unfortunate that motion (E) was not selected, because it is the one motion that we could all have gone along with, if we believed in the referendum result. Anyone who votes to revoke tonight is actually saying, “We do not accept that result—we never did, and we never will.” I hope that that motion will be turned down.

Mr Speaker: I have now to announce the results of the deferred Divisions held earlier today. I shall do so with the greatest possible dispatch.

The Question relating to relationships and sex education requires a majority of Members of the House and a majority of Members representing constituencies in England if it is to be agreed to. The totals for Members of the House were as follows: the Ayes were 538 and the Noes were 21. The totals for Members representing constituencies in England were as follows: the Ayes were 482 and the Noes were 14, so the Ayes have it.

In respect of the Question relating to animal welfare, the Ayes were 322 and the Noes were 15, so the Ayes have it. In respect of the Question relating to rural development, the Ayes were 316 and the Noes were 239, so the Ayes have it. In respect of the Question relating to rural development, with, in brackets—I merely remind the House of what it knows itself—the words “Rules and Decisions”, the Ayes were 316 and the Noes were 240, so the Ayes have it.

5.38 pm

Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con): It is an honour to follow the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey). She made some important points about the manifesto promises and about living up to them. There are some other promises that we need to live up to. Time and again, I have heard colleagues criticise the Prime Minister, in the House or on the media, for setting out her red lines and not budging from them. For me, those red lines simply represent the promises that were made before the referendum. It was certainly not just a binary question about the options of staying and leaving. The question about what leaving meant is critical to this debate, because the promises that Vote Leave set out—I believe the hon. Member for Vauxhall was a member of the Vote Leave campaign—

Kate Hoey indicated dissent.

Kevin Hollinrake: The hon. Lady shakes her head. I apologise.

Vote Leave, which was the primary advocate for leaving, clearly set out promises to control our borders, control our laws and control our money, while having a free trade agreement. I have read the Vote Leave manifesto several times, and the words were, “There is a free trade area that stretches from Iceland to the borders of Russia, and we will be part of it.” Those were the promises that were made.

I believe the Prime Minister has come back to this House with a deal that meets the promises made; that is what her deal does. There is not a single motion on this Order Paper that lives up to those promises, however; all of them incorporate compromises that move outside those red lines. She has come back with a Goldilocks deal—not too hard, not too soft—but still people will not accept this deal.

If we do not approve the Prime Minister’s deal in the days and weeks to come—hopefully days—I think certain Members in this House might well look back and think, “That was our opportunity and it has now gone.” We should support the Prime Minister’s deal, because I do not think, having a small business background, that it is right that we should think of taking an uncalculated risk with the lives and livelihoods of small businesspeople, who we know could be affected by a no-deal exit. So we definitely need to leave with a deal.

How do we leave with a deal if we do not support the Prime Minister’s deal? It means we have to remove at least one of the red lines. From my perspective, despite the fact that it would breach the manifesto promises, I would remove the red line on the single market. There will be challenges, certainly particularly between Northern Ireland and Ireland, but most of them are solved by membership of the single market. Some 80% of the border challenges are about the single market. Barnier said it himself: customs checks need not happen at the border.

We can do without the customs union, but we need the single market for regulatory standards, particularly on foods. A humble cottage pie sat on a supermarket shelf in Northern Ireland has passed over that border typically seven times. If there were regulatory checks, they would have to happen every single time according to EU rules; and it makes the rules, and we have been part of that system for 46 years, so we cannot simply say now “We don’t agree with your rules despite the fact that we’ve been happy”—or relatively happy—“to sit within them for 46 years.”

I will support two motions this evening. One is motion (D) brought forward by a number of colleagues, including my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) and the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock). Many colleagues have been big advocates of common market 2.0; it is a free trade agreement. I have concerns about it: I have concerns about the customs union, and the longevity of the customs union and our ability to exit it. Paragraph (1)(c) says we will need to agree with the EU our exit from the customs union, and I cannot see what incentive it would have to let us leave.

If we approved this motion, we would also have to agree lots of things with the Opposition. I do not have an issue about working cross-party on this at all, but I do fear that if we approve this, as we take the legislation forward over the next months and years, Labour Front

Benchers will ask an ever higher price, because there is a political divide between the Opposition Front Bench and the Government Front Bench.

The other proposal I will happily accept is motion (H). It represents an excellent way forward; it is bold and decisive, and I will support it this evening.

5.43 pm

Chuka Umunna (Streatham) (Ind): I have five quick points, or thereabouts, to make in five minutes.

First, it is an absolute and utter disgrace that it has come to this—that the Back Benchers of this House are having to force the Government to follow a process to reach a decision. The Prime Minister should have been the one sponsoring and initiating this process—that is called leadership—but the reason why time and again she has failed to do so is that she always fails to face down the ideological zealots in her own party.

The Prime Minister has suggested that if what comes out of this process—and I hope we get a majority behind something—is at variance with what she has proposed she may simply ignore Parliament. But this is a parliamentary democracy, and the campaigns to leave the EU were fought in the name of parliamentary sovereignty. Is she seriously saying she can maintain any credibility or authority in her negotiations with the EU Council if she seeks to set her face against the will as expressed by the House through this process?

On the substance of the motions, I will be supporting the people's vote motion tabled by the right hon. Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett)—motion (M)—and I commend her for her excellent speech, which explained far better than I could why we should all support the motion. However, I will explain why I personally support it. As a House, we had a duty in the last Parliament to try to square the circle between the promises that were made in the 2016 referendum and what was deliverable. That is why I voted—against my heart—to invoke article 50 two years ago. However, with every week that has passed, we have seen not only that the campaigns to leave the European Union lied but that they have broken their promises, and the Electoral Commission has confirmed that they cheated, too.

I listened carefully to the speeches of the hon. Members for Brigg and Goole (Andrew Percy) and for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) about the importance of delivering on the result of the referendum, but the problem that this Parliament has been grappling with is that it is impossible to deliver on the mythical, fantastical promises that were made back then. In the face of this disaster, and of the catastrophe that we have seen unfolding throughout the negotiations, the last resort is always to invoke the will of the people, but the simple fact is that, ever since that referendum was held, all the signs are that proceeding with this flawed Brexit is far from what this country wants.

After the 2016 vote, you would have thought that support for what had been voted for would have gone up, but almost every poll shows that support for it has fallen. Let us not forget that that referendum was held three years ago, when 37% of registered electors voted to leave. The most recent poll of the British people was held in 2017, when the Conservative hard Brexit was put to the British people and the party of Government lost its majority. If that were not the case, we would not be having this protracted process right now. Above all, I

say to those who talk about the will of the people that democracy is not static; it is a dynamic thing. We in this country did not choose to have a system in which we have one general election and a one-party state and in which we never go back to the people for their view on things as our country and the world change and adapt.

The younger generations of this country have not been mentioned in the debate so far. I listened to the contribution of my constituency neighbour, the hon. Member for Vauxhall, and I say to her that the younger people in our borough, which is one of the youngest in the country, will never forgive this Parliament if it seeks to impose this disaster on them. More than 2 million young people have become entitled to vote since that 2016 poll, and we know that an overwhelming majority of them want a say on this process and that an overwhelming majority of them want to keep the current deal and the privileges that the older generations in this country have enjoyed for years.

If in the end we are faced with a cliff edge, with all the catastrophes that have been spelled out in Cabinet documents and knowing what it will mean for people's jobs and livelihoods, and if we do not have a people's vote, of course we must do as motion (L) proposes and revoke article 50. No one in this House has a mandate to destroy people's jobs and livelihoods, but we know that a no-deal exit would do that because the Cabinet has produced its own briefing papers telling us that that is a fact. This is what is at stake here; this is what we have to think about when we make this decision. This is not about us so much as about future generations, and it is important that we do right by them.

5.48 pm

John Stevenson (Carlisle) (Con): For many months, we have had broadly the same debate on the same subject, with many of the same speakers saying exactly the same things, and what precisely have we achieved? It really is now time for Parliament to find a way forward so that we and the country can return to the daily issues that really matter to people. Let us be honest: our constituents up and down the country are fed up and frustrated, and arguably, so are many Members of Parliament. We as a Parliament really need to step up and make some positive decisions. I therefore welcome today's debate. We should probably have done this a couple of years ago and got it out of the way.

My starting point is very simple: this country voted to leave the EU. I therefore firmly believe that we must leave the EU institutions. What was unclear from the referendum, however, was the nature of our future relationship with the EU. As we have discovered, this means many different things to different people, which has to some extent created the difficulties that we are now in. There is no clear direction. In my view, sadly, this has also been down to a serious lack of leadership by the Government—an unwillingness to bring people together and to reach some sort of compromise. We cannot go on as we are. This country requires some clear direction and, hopefully, we may achieve that today. We will find out this evening what this House is willing to accept, and perhaps something will start to emerge. To some extent, Parliament has already indicated that it does not want a no-deal scenario nor a second referendum, and there has also been no sign that the PM's deal will actually achieve a majority, but I have

[John Stevenson]

supported it twice and will do so again. Interestingly, and I say this to some fellow Conservative Members, we would be leaving the EU this Friday had the deal passed, so I do have to question their motives.

What should we do? My mother has always remarked that the general view back in the 1970s was that the UK wanted to be part of an economic bloc, not a political union. When I have similar discussions with my mother nearly 50 years on, her view is still exactly the same, and I suspect that that is the view, attitude or outlook of the vast majority of the people of the UK. It is certainly mine.

I am comfortable with the fact that our country will be leaving the EU's institutions. However, it is in our economic and political interest to be part of a close economic arrangement. For today's purposes, that would be EFTA and EEA membership under the common market 2.0 approach, which would take us out of the EU but keep us part of the economic market that is Europe. I would have liked to go into the detail of that approach, but that has been well argued by the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock) and my hon. Friends the Members for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) and for Thirsk and Malton (Kevin Hollinrake).

We have the opportunity today to indicate to the Government what would command the support of this House. That would apply only if the PM's deal does not succeed, but I hope that we can find some sort of consensus and a way forward. Leaving the EU is central, and being part of a large economic market is vital, so the obvious solution is an EFTA-EEA arrangement. I will be supporting it later today, and I encourage others to do the same.

5.52 pm

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): I am happy that we have got this far in spite of the Government's attempts to derail the process, but I am sad that we are having the first attempt at this sort of dialogue 1,007 days after 23 June 2016.

I am pleased that the tone has been broadly positive, with people setting out their views on the different options before us. However, I must speak strongly against motion (B)—the no-deal option tabled by the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron)—because anyone who advocates no deal is not participating in rational discourse, as I think he called it. No one advocating no deal could possibly have recently spoken to business, the police, the NHS, UK citizens in the EU, or EU citizens in the UK, because there are no-deal implications for all of them. I therefore hope that no deal gets soundly defeated today.

Turning to motion (D), while a common market 2.0 could be one of the best of the available options, it could also possibly be one of the worst, because it would leave us as rule takers not rule makers. It would also enable those who are antagonistic towards the EU to carry on their campaign on the basis that we would have to sign up to a large part of the EU's agenda, including making financial contributions, without having any say in the goings-on. In many ways, it probably represents a halfway house before another push to leave the European Union at some point, so I hope that that option will not be supported either.

I am afraid that a number of other motions before us fall into the category of unicorns or wishful thinking. The idea that things can be renegotiated at very short notice in the time that might be available, with new protocols and arrangements found that have not been found in the last two and a half years, is wishful thinking. Of course, anything we do requires the European Union to agree to an extension. Some of the motions, such as the customs union proposal, are not unicorns but are far too unambitious in the arrangement they seek with the European Union.

I will focus on two motions in my last couple of minutes. I am pleased that the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) tabled motion (L) with cross-party support, underlining that revoking article 50 remains a possibility for the United Kingdom, and should be a possibility up to the very last moment. We need the ability to block a no-deal scenario, which is what revocation is there for. I am pleased a cross-party effort was involved in the case that went to the European Court of Justice to secure confirmation that the UK can revoke article 50 at any point prior to our departure.

On motion (M), as other Members have commented, I hope the oratory of the right hon. Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett) will have convinced many in this Chamber, and not just those who are already signed up to the idea, to come in behind a confirmatory public vote. As many Members have said this afternoon, and as I am sure others will say before the debate is over, the explanation given a thousand days ago on what would be on offer in our leaving the European Union is clearly not what will be deliverable. If the House decides to proceed with some of the motions today, they are clearly not what was voted on two and a half years ago. Certainly they are not what the Prime Minister says is representative of Brexit, which is why I think this has to go back to a confirmatory public vote. With the level of cross-party support for such a vote, I hope it is something we will be able to proceed with when we get to the next stage.

Mr Speaker: Order. I am immensely grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

5.57 pm

George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con): I start by sincerely thanking my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin), the right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles), the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock) and other Members on both sides of the House who have worked to make this afternoon possible. They and all of us participating in this debate are doing democracy, this House and the Government a favour, although the Government will not admit it. And they are doing the British people, who want us to find a sensible Brexit solution, a favour.

I was a remain Minister in the last Government, but I have been very clear that we have to honour and respect the referendum result both nationally, in my duty as a Member of this House, and locally in my responsibility and duty to the people of Mid Norfolk, who voted 62% to leave whereas the country voted 52% to leave.

I have also been consistently clear that we have to respect the concerns of the 48% who did not want to leave, the legitimate interests of those citizens who could not vote in the referendum, particularly the young whose future we are shaping and who will have to live with the consequences of our actions, and the legitimate grievances of the 52% who voted to leave. One of the great disappointments of the last two and a half years is the almost shattering silence of those who brilliantly harnessed those grievances to deliver Brexit but who have not spoken about how we tackle them—the feeling of blue-collar job insecurity, the lack of proper local infrastructure, the house dumping and the sense that big government and big debt are working against the localities of this country. That agenda of renewal has to be right at the heart of delivering Brexit.

We were told today that this debate—this hunt for indicative votes—was a constitutional outrage, was a remainder conspiracy and was tying the Government's hands. All three claims are completely false. First, since when is it a constitutional outrage for this House to control its own business? It has always controlled its own business. To those who say that the Government of the day control the business of the House, I say that, yes, they do, because their Back Benchers, normally, automatically grant them the power so to do. The sovereignty over our time has always, since the civil war, been with this House. To hear my hon. Friend the Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg) pray in aid medieval and Tudor laws against the sovereignty of this House, which I thought he was the greatest champion of, defending an Executive who prefer not to listen, was one of the most extraordinary moments of today.

Secondly, if it is a remainder conspiracy, it is some conspiracy and some set of remainers, because all of us who are working with my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) are supporting the Brexit withdrawal Bill. We are not trying to defy Brexit; we are trying to find a way to get it through. Thirdly, the claim that we are tying the Government's hands is nonsense. This is an indicative vote to help the Front-Bench team to see where, if, God forbid, this is needed, a plan B or some further concession might be found to carry this Bill through the House if, as I hope they do not, some of my hardline Brexit colleagues, who would prefer a no deal to a deal, continue to hold the Government to ransom. Let us reach out across the House to find a Brexit that the whole country can support. Tonight, I will be voting for motions (D) and (H)—for EFTA—and I will be voting against having a second referendum. If this shambles goes on and on, in due course the British people will ultimately decide, probably in a general election. This House has to lift every rock to find a Brexit deal that can get through.

The arguments for EFTA have been beautifully put by others this afternoon, and I wish simply to make two points. The vast majority of my leave voters in Norfolk said, “Mr Freeman, I voted to be in or I want to be in a common market, not a political union.” They were stunned when they heard that the Brexit vote was somehow going to mean an extraction from all of the single market—from all the trade benefits of being in Europe. That is why EFTA is such a powerful solution. It does require free movement, but it is free movement of workers, not of citizens. I argue that it goes with two key reforms. The first is welfare reform, to make it clear

that people who come here to work should not automatically receive the universal benefits that Clement Attlee put in place for those who had fallen on the beaches and paid into our country—they can earn that right. The second is a massive programme of blue-collar skills investment to support those fearing economic insecurity. Mostly, I think EFTA has something that no other solution has: it is a settlement of this question. We would be joining a bloc in Europe whereby, as we joined, we would change the dynamics of Europe. It is a bloc that has been going for 40 years. It is tried, tested and proven, and business can rely on it. I commend it as plan B, should the Government's deal not go through.

6.2 pm

Paul Farrelly (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Lab): I did not vote for the legislation for the EU referendum, or to trigger article 50 regardless of the consequences, which are now all too plain to see. I made my views clear during the 2017 election and, despite most people's expectations, I was re-elected. So throughout this, I have been consistent and honest, as has the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke). The last vote on the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement was, sadly, the first time that he and I were in a different Lobby. That was not because we do not believe that leaving the European Union is a terrible mistake for our country, but because the Prime Minister has so successfully ticked the clock down that he was just being pragmatic: pass her agreement, then live and fight for the future another day. I respect that decision.

Today, I will also be pragmatic because otherwise this intransigent, deeply flawed Prime Minister may well get a no-deal way, just so that she can wag her finger at the rest of us and say, “I told you so.” Today, we also owe it to the three Ministers who honourably resigned this week to help to give us this opportunity, to come to a clear decision. We also owe it to the right hon. and hon. Members who have done such sterling work in the national, not personal, interest. The right hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr Grieve) has been truly outstanding, as has the irrepressible right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry).

In my local area of north Staffordshire, I now seem to be a lone island of remain in a shifting sea of leave among Members of this House. I certainly dread the thought of a second referendum. Powerful, loud and deep-pocketed voices would try to drown out debate with cries of “Betrayal,” but we have to be brave. In the interests of our country, we should not shy away from giving the people, including young citizens who are 16, a final say on their future. If the House gives a firm steer today, the Government should not only listen but put the matter to a people's vote, with an option to remain. Should they do so, I will campaign, as we did in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 2016, for a remain result. I will campaign to remain and reform, if necessary, from within—to remain and heed the lessons of history, to keep our place alongside onetime foes who have been for the past 75 years our partners in peace and prosperity on an often-troubled small continent, in a rapidly changing world.

In 2016, we in Newcastle-under-Lyme fought the referendum campaign as hard as any general election campaign. Sadly, that fight was not evident in all parts of our country. It is true that in Newcastle-under-Lyme

[Paul Farrelly]

people voted by 60% to 40% to leave, but they did not vote for what happens next. In next-door Stoke, the vote was 70% to 30%. That difference shows that, if we make the argument, we can make the difference, particularly when the national result was so narrow, at 52% to 48%. What was missing on the ground in that referendum was the engagement of the Conservative party. Having introduced the referendum, the party of government took no position, in the interests of the party itself, not of our country. The Prime Minister has behaved in the same way ever since, but she gained no majority from her approach in the general election, and she now has no majority in the House for her so-called deal. She stumbles on and on; she is truly the stumbling block.

When we vote later, I hope we will vote to revoke article 50, or to give us the leeway to do so. I urge colleagues not to abstain on motion (L). If we do not vote to revoke, I hope we vote for something pragmatic and for a future that keeps us close to our partners in Europe. When we vote, I will pay great heed to the lead that has been given by true statespeople, such as the right hon. and learned Members for Rushcliffe and for Beaconsfield, the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin), the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles), my right hon. Friends the Members for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) and for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn), my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer), and many others. I hope the Prime Minister will pay heed to them as well. It was simply wrong for her to do what she did last week in that extraordinary broadcast to the country and do down our Parliament when it is full of really good people who are a real credit to our democracy.

6.6 pm

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): I passionately believe that we have to follow the 2016 referendum result, even though I voted remain. I voted for the triggering of article 50, to keep no deal on the table, against a second referendum and against a long delay to our exit date. My voting record in Parliament reflects the will of the British people because I feel that anything else would lead to huge mistrust in our political system.

I also believe that Parliament and politicians are becoming toxic. The 17 million people who voted to leave think that the establishment is against them, too busy playing party politics and determined to stop Brexit, so I would not do anything—and I mean anything—that I believe would undermine the decision of the people who voted to leave. I want a strong Brexit, a workers' Brexit and a Brexit that unifies our country. How do we achieve that? Through common market 2.0 and membership of the European Free Trade Association. We would be out of the political union of the EU, out of the common agricultural policy, and out of EU rules on home affairs and taxation. We would be out of the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. But, as an EFTA member, we would have access to the single market, thereby safeguarding our businesses and jobs.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Camborne and Redruth (George Eustice) pointed out, it is worth remembering that the British founded EFTA in 1959,

when Harold Macmillan signed the Stockholm convention. The Chancellor at the time, Derick Heathcoat-Amory, said:

"We wanted to be able to share in the prosperity that a great single trading unit would bring with it".—[*Official Report*, 14 December 1959; Vol. 615, c. 1057.]

Our joining would be welcomed by member states—by the Icelandic Foreign Minister and by the Norwegian Prime Minister—and it has been reported that the EFTA court president has said that EFTA membership would solve the problem of the Irish backstop.

On freedom of movement, with EFTA membership, we would take back control, because articles 112 and 113 of the EEA agreement would provide us with important safeguards, allowing Britain to

"unilaterally take appropriate measures"

in the event of

"serious economic, societal or environmental difficulties",

or on grounds of public policy, security or health, in the case of workers.

It is wrong to think that we would be rule takers. My hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles) highlighted that Norway and Iceland alone have derogated from 400 EU Acts between them and how Norway has declined to implement the postal services directive. As a member of EFTA, we would be part of the EFTA court, which is a guidance court, not an authoritative court in the same way the European Court of Justice is. The customs arrangement on our side would be temporary until we were able to solve the issue of the frictionless border, and then we would have full EFTA membership and be able to do trade deals, as other EFTA members have done.

The common market 2.0 is also a Eurosceptic Brexit. Many Eurosceptics over the past few years have supported the Norway option—even UKIP tweeted in support of it. Dan Hannan has supported EFTA in the past. Douglas Carswell has supported EFTA in the past.

George Freeman: Margaret Thatcher.

Robert Halfon: My hon. Friend reminds me that Margaret Thatcher said in her 2003 book how supportive she was of EFTA:

"These countries now enjoy free trade with the European Union... They also enjoy the unhindered access guaranteed by the operation of the European Single Market. But they remain outside the customs union, the CAP, the CFP, the common foreign and security policy and the rest of the legal/bureaucratic tangle of EU institutions."

If it is good enough for the right hon. Lady, it is good enough for me.

In joining EFTA, we do take back control. It is a workers' Brexit because we keep workers' rights and protections, such as annual leave, equal pay and maternity leave. It is a take-back-control Brexit because we are out of the political union of the EU, and we safeguard jobs and our economy. Above all, it is a uniting Brexit. It brings together remainers and leavers and keep us in an alliance of democracies.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr Speaker: Order. After the House has heard from the hon. Member for Sedgfield (Phil Wilson), I am afraid that it will be necessary to reduce the time limit on Back-Bench speeches to three minutes, in an attempt to accommodate as many colleagues as possible.

6.12 pm

Phil Wilson (Sedgefield) (Lab): I rise in support of motion (M), in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett), which calls for a confirmatory vote by the British people on any Brexit deal. I will begin by saying why I have come to the conclusion that this should be put back to the people. I completely respect colleagues who have a different viewpoint from me, but this is a position that I hold passionately and with great sincerity. I know that those who disagree with me hold their views in the same way. However, I believe in my heart of hearts that the British people have the right to the final say on this country's future direction.

We already have the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement, but today there is the possibility to decide on other options to negotiate with the EU and perhaps what will become another withdrawal agreement or deal. It is clear from the range of motions tabled that Brexit can take many forms, but about three years since the EU referendum, we now know what Brexit will look like if the Prime Minister's deal gets through. My question is: how does that compare with what was promised in the referendum? Is it what the people voted for back then? The answer to both questions is that we will never know unless we ask them.

My experience is that the concept of Brexit is just that—a concept. It is an idea, a viewpoint, a general principle, such as “Leave means leave”. As those who adhere to the concept of “Leave means leave” try to give it depth or any kind of coherence, it falls apart into different schools of thought. Some actually believe that leave means leave, so they just want to leave. There are those who have given a bit more thought to the concept and belong to the Brexit school that teaches how to leave the EU on World Trade Organisation rules. There is the school that teaches how to do the Norway-plus option and schools that adhere to the customs union and the closest possible relationship with the single market.

There are so many different schools that teach how to do Brexit. To their adherents, they are all legitimate Brexits. They have one thing in common: they want to deliver Brexit, but none of them is Brexit. The only Brexit on offer is the Brexit deal negotiated by the Government with the EU. That now defines Brexit; it is Brexit. However, if after this process today, the House agrees with a different option from the one negotiated with the EU, that becomes Brexit. But the question still remains: how does it compare with the promises made in 2016? The people have the right to decide.

David Tredinnick: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Phil Wilson: No, I am not going to give way because people are desperate to speak and there is not enough time.

Some say that another public vote would be divisive, but implementing any deal without a final say by the British people is divisive and would be for years to come as people realise that Brexit does not end on the day we may leave the EU, but that it only begins on that day.

Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab): Seventy per cent. of my voters in Barnsley voted to leave and they

would like their point of view put into action. Is this motion really about staying in the European Union, and not about putting the question back to the people?

Phil Wilson: As my hon. Friend knows, my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Peter Kyle) and I have been working on a compromise so that the people can decide whether the Brexit on offer is the way that they want to go. That option was not there in 2016 and the people have the right to compare the Brexit facts with the promises made back then.

Implementing any deal without a final say for the British people will be divisive, because they will not have had a say on whether they want, for example, to pay £39 billion to the EU. They also will not have been asked whether they want to remain in a customs union, to accept freedom of movement or to be like Norway. In fact, they will not have a say on any of the proposals that could come to fruition. It is not a criticism of colleagues in the House who have put forward such proposals today, but how do we know what the people voted for or will consent to unless we ask them?

It continues to lie heavily with me that on the several occasions in this House that I have asked the Prime Minister whether her deal is better than the one we have now, she could not answer. Maybe the people will disagree with me and agree with the Prime Minister, but it is time to find out. If the people look at the Brexit facts and they compare favourably with what was promised almost three years ago, so the Brexit deal passes—fine, let us see the deal implemented. Under our proposal, the deal would be given passage through this House with the proviso that it goes to the people in a confirmatory ballot; if the deal is agreed to, it is implemented. That would then put an end to any idea of a third or a fourth referendum. In fact, there is a strong argument that the process that we are undertaking now should have taken place before the referendum in 2016, with the facts before the people, instead of promises that will never materialise.

Some say that what we are promising is undemocratic because the people have already had their say. Yes, they have. But they did not have a say on the current Brexit deal—or, in fact, on any Brexit deal—and they should. When I suggest that the electorate should be given the final say on what the deal should be, some people react as if the only ones who would be allowed to vote are those who voted to remain. People should have the right to change their minds—not just from leave to remain, but from remain to leave. I do not believe that MPs in this House today, who are elected, in theory, for five-year terms, should have the final say on an issue that will affect our electors, and their families and descendants, for years to come. If that were to happen, it would not reflect well on the establishment, however it is appointed or elected.

The final say should not be given to Members of this House exclusively. The final say belongs to the people. Brexit started with the people and it should end with the people.

6.18 pm

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): Thank you for calling me, Mr Speaker. I am very much used to the time limit changing just as I rise to speak.

[James Cartlidge]

I campaigned to remain, but I promised my constituents that I would accept the result of the referendum that my colleagues and I voted into law. In my view, the best deal to do that is undoubtedly the one negotiated by the Prime Minister, with all the difficult squaring of circles that it has had to go through. I sincerely hope that we do agree to that deal. If we do not, we have to accept that, given no deal has been defeated twice in this place, we must have a deal that flexes one of the red lines—the single market and the customs union. I explained on Monday that the issue of free movement should not be as big a concern, because our immigration numbers will be the same; people will just come from further afield. The key issue is trade. If we go down the EFTA/EEA route, we would be outside the customs union, but we would keep the EU free trade deal, which is the single market.

If we were outside the EU but in the customs union, there would be a profound problem. What would happen when we wanted to do a trade deal with a country that the EU did not wish to conclude one with or was unable to do that? This is fundamental. Imagine if it were a key economic bloc such as China. If we wanted to negotiate a trade deal with the Chinese, we would have to wait for the EU to conclude its trade deal, which would take much longer and be far more complicated. The Swiss, whose fine EFTA country is in the single market but outside the customs union, negotiated, as long ago as 2013, an excellent trade deal with the Chinese that has given them billions of pounds' worth of trade in industrial goods and very strong access in services. This is the key point. There are many good reasons why we as a country could negotiate a trade deal with China that the EU could not, one of which is that we have a profound offer in services that is very different from the overall EU mix.

I think personally that we have to say to our people what are the benefits and opportunities of leaving. One of them must be to live up to our great history and heritage as the home of capitalism and free trade, and go back to trading around the world but with a close relationship with the European single market to fall back on. That works brilliantly for Switzerland and for Norway. In essence, it means leaving the political union and staying in the economic one. It is a very good deal. It is not as good as the Prime Minister's deal, for all the reasons I have explained in previous speeches. However, at this moment in time, we have to decide whether we really want to deliver Brexit or not. If we are going to do so, and if it is not through the Prime Minister's deal, which I hope we will vote on on Friday, there must be a compromise, and the best one is that which plays to our strengths as a great free-trade nation.

6.21 pm

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for South Suffolk (James Cartlidge).

I shall be voting for motions (M) and (L) for the excellent reasons that the proposers of both those motions have made very clear to the House. What a great debate we have had, and has it not been so revealing, so comforting and so good to see and hear how many hon. Members, notably on the Conservative Benches, have

changed their minds? Not only have they changed their minds—they are tonight going to change the way that they have voted in the past. I do not know, Mr Speaker, if you have had the benefit of looking at the great names that have been added in support of motion (D): the hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles); the right hon. Members for Loughborough (Nicky Morgan) and for Harlow (Robert Halfon); the hon. Members for Brigg and Goole (Andrew Percy), for East Renfrewshire (Paul Masterton) and for Mid Norfolk (George Freeman); and the right hon. Members for Mid Sussex (Sir Nicholas Soames), for Wantage (Mr Vaizey) and for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin). I could go on and on.

All those Members will be supporting common market 2.0, the single market and the customs union—something that over the past two years many of us, on many occasions, have risen to speak on, argue for and vote in favour of. That was at considerable personal and political cost, but we made the case, and, time and again, other hon. Members, notably those on the Conservative Benches, argued and voted against it. But, joy of joys, tonight they finally see the merits of that solution to this great Brexit dilemma, and indeed, as I say, they are going to change their votes.

We also hear tonight that there is every chance that the Prime Minister's deal may indeed get through, so this could end up as an otiose exercise, as we lawyers call it. We now learn that hon. and right hon. Members on the Conservative Benches who, on previous occasions, have voted against the Prime Minister's deal, not once but twice, are now going to—guess what?—not only change their minds, but will, too, have and enjoy the privilege of changing their vote to support the Prime Minister.

What a profound irony—and, some would say, a disgrace, verging on hypocrisy. Hon. and right hon. Members expect and will enjoy the right to change their mind and their vote, but not allow the people of this country the same right. That is why I shall be supporting the motion to allow whatever we agree and decide on to go back to the British people. They are entitled also to change their mind and their vote, especially when they see that, whatever way you cut it, Brexit will make our country worse off. And if it turns out that the majority do not want Brexit, it will not be on my conscience.

6.24 pm

Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry), although I was disappointed that she did not mention how many times she thought the electorate could change their mind—does she think it should be two, three or four times?

Anna Soubry: Let me tell the hon. Gentleman this. We have a referendum with, on the ballot paper, whatever deal we settle on and the option of remain. If people vote for the Prime Minister's deal or whatever, that is it, and if they vote remain, end of—we stay in the EU.

Chris Philp: That was not the case that the right hon. Lady made. She made the case that people should be able to change their mind repeatedly, which implies that she would support any number of referendums.

I rise to speak against motion (D), in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford (Nick Boles), on common market 2.0, and a similar motion, (H), in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Camborne and Redruth (George Eustice), on membership of the European economic area. I strongly oppose those motions for two reasons. First, they both entail signing up to full single market rules. The House of Commons Library published a paper only yesterday that says on page 19:

“EEA membership... involves a range of obligations, including implementation of EU rules relating to the Single Market”, with no decision-making role, other than being “consulted”. For a great British institution such as the City of London or our entire industrial economy, our merely being consulted on the rules that govern them simply is not good enough.

Secondly, there is the question of financial contributions, which was a controversial part of the referendum campaign. Another House of Commons paper published on 21 December found that Norway pays per capita contributions that are around half our current level—so, one would assume, about £5 billion per year. The promise made to the British people about saving money would not be delivered in either common market 2.0 or as a member of the European economic area.

We then come to the question of free movement, which was another contentious issue during the referendum campaign. Membership of the single market entails full free movement. Some Members have referred to various brakes or safeguards in the European economic area agreement. Specifically, article 112 says that any such safeguards must be “restricted” in their “scope and duration”. Article 114 says that if a state, like the UK, were to use those safeguards, other member states could take “rebalancing measures” against them, meaning that some of the benefits of single market membership could be withdrawn. No country other than Liechtenstein, in very limited circumstances, has ever taken advantage of those provisions.

James Cartledge: Switzerland.

Chris Philp: Well, Switzerland is currently engaged in a running battle with the European Union and has been unable to implement the result of its own 2014 referendum on free movement.

In the 54 seconds remaining, let me briefly turn to the question of trade deals, which relates only to motion (D) and not motion (H). Under the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham and Stamford, during our customs union membership—this would probably apply to the Labour party’s official proposal as well—we would be bound by all trade agreements done by the European Union. We would be compelled to follow them, without the right of veto that we currently enjoy, and we would be prevented from doing any free trade deals of our own. That would be greatly to our disadvantage and would exclude countries such as India, China and the USA. For those reasons, I will be opposing motions (D) and (H).

6.28 pm

Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op): As others have said, this debate should have happened a long time ago. Unfortunately, in the meantime, positions have become more entrenched and the country has

become more divided. I hope that today, the healing process can begin. I want to say at the outset that each one of us has thought deeply for a long time. These are difficult issues, and we have all made balanced judgments from a place of good intent. We should respect where others have arrived at, even though some of us have arrived at different places.

We also have to remember that nothing about this debate is perfect. There is no easy solution, and there is no panacea. Every single thing before us has upsides and downsides, and I am not going to pretend any differently about what I want to support this evening. We need some honesty in the debate, and we need some balance too. The only thing that is absolute is that compromise is absolutely necessary, and we must have that in everything we do. My other criteria for looking at the things before us today is what is actually doable and achievable because, for too long in this debate, we have been chasing unicorns around that unicorn forest.

Although I have arrived at the view that, on the balance of upsides and downsides, common market 2.0 for me offers a balance I can live with, I will be voting for other things this evening. I think today is about keeping as many options as possible on the table—in the forest, or whatever metaphor hon. Members want—not narrowing them down. In brief, the upsides of common market 2.0 for me are that it is about leaving the EU in economically the best possible way of doing so—the single market is the key element, not the customs union—and we can do it quickly as well. There are of course downsides: there are still issues about freedom of movement and whether we are a rule taker. As ever in this debate, there are shades of grey; it is not all just black and white.

Gareth Snell (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): I want to place on the record my thanks to my hon. Friend and my hon. Friend the Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock). While many in this place have retrenched to process issues and talked about procedures in the House, the two of them have actually taken the bull by the horns and looked at issues that can resolve this situation practically. I have some concerns about what she is proposing, but she has at least proposed something substantive, and I thank her for that.

Lucy Powell: I thank my hon. Friend very much. As my mum always says, “Those who do nowt do nowt wrong, do they?” We always get criticised for having a position, rather than for not doing so. As I say, I respect the many people across the House who have worked in cross-party teams to try to do that.

Finally, on the issue of the second referendum, for me this is a separate question. We have to find something that we can put to the public if that is what this House decides. We still need to determine what the best Brexit looks like which, if the House wanted, we would put back to the people. We cannot have remain versus remain on the ballot paper, as I know some would want, and I do not think we can have remain versus leave in a form that is undefined. Regardless of what people’s views are about a second referendum, I just implore those in all parts of the House to agree on what Brexit may look like, including in the eventuality of a second referendum.

6.32 pm

Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con): Thank you, Mr Speaker—brevity, brevity.

I sincerely hope that we will have some clarity at the end of this process, and that it will move us closer to the Brexit I was sent here from Clacton to deliver. From my travels across my constituency, I know that the vast majority of my constituents just want this whole agonising process to be brought to a conclusion with a Brexit. Yet because of the constraints applied by this House, the deal on the table is the best way to deliver that Brexit, despite my serious concerns about the backstop and the continuing legal jurisdiction of the ECJ. I now feel that we have to vote for it, and head off the possibility of no Brexit at all.

The political scenery has changed dramatically, and this House has become more assertive by taking no deal off the table. There is also the emerging threat of an extremely soft or painfully slow Brexit. Moreover—this is becoming apparent now—as the House begins to assert itself, the Brexit deal we now have on offer is as good as it is ever going to be. There is not, and there never will be, a perfect deal; there is only a pragmatic outcome. By failing to move beyond this point at all and by failing to compromise and start on the road to Brexit, we are failing to satisfy anyone who voted to leave. We are also failing to satisfy those who voted to remain, and that includes me, but my position fell with the result of the referendum.

In the light of the instruction I got from people in Clacton to deliver Brexit, I would ask my colleagues if they want to be the ones that make Brexit worse, or even lose it entirely, when they could be the ones to deliver a good form of Brexit after all this pain and division—a Brexit that delivers on the promises. No doubt some will remain stubborn and push hopelessly for an unattainable no deal, but they fail to recognise that no matter how much they may wish for it, there is not a majority for no deal in the House and there has not been since the 2017 election. If colleagues reject that point and doggedly reiterate the Prime Minister's line that no deal is better than a bad deal, that does not change the fact that supporting no deal is flogging a dead horse. A deal is all we can possibly have.

David Tredinnick: Does my hon. Friend share my concern about motion (M) on a second referendum? What would he do in my constituency, which voted out by 60% to 40%? Does he understand my constituents' concern that a second referendum would be the end of democracy?

Giles Watling: I agree with my hon. Friend. A second referendum would be even more divisive than the position in which we find ourselves.

Although no deal is the legal default, we are in the weird position that it is no longer possible. Events have overtaken dogma and stubbornness. I will therefore support the deal in future votes in a spirit of pragmatism and because of my desire to deliver Brexit for my constituents. I will vote to support no deal today, again for my constituents, but to colleagues who are still voting for no deal in the vain hope of reaching that outcome, I say that the House will not allow it. It is time to get serious about the deal in its current form because all the other options are far worse than the one on offer.

I will not go through all the motions, but I am looking for pragmatic and realistic options. I want to get the deal over the line for the good of the country in the future.

6.36 pm

Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Clacton (Giles Watling). He will not be surprised that I profoundly disagree with his viewpoint, but it is good that the House has finally had the chance to debate the full range of options.

I will vote with most enthusiasm tonight for motion (M), which my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett) tabled. I voted to respect the outcome of the referendum in 2016 and trigger article 50, but in the past two and half years, so much more has become clear about the detail of the real impact of Brexit on our constituents and so many of the promises of those who campaigned to leave have been shown to be untrue.

I was proud to be one of 1 million who marched in London on Saturday. It should not only be the 650 of us in Parliament who get to have the final say on which Brexit option is decided. Given that Brexit has such huge implications for our country, surely it is only right that once a deal has been finalised, the people should have the final say.

I will vote for motion (L), which the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) tabled, to strengthen the protection against a no-deal Brexit for our country.

However, as a House of Commons, we have a duty to try to help the Prime Minister and the Government to move on from the deal that she has been peddling so unsuccessfully for so long. The dilemma for the House is how close or how distant a relationship we want with the EU. Every independent economist suggests that the more distant our relationship with the EU in the future, the greater the adverse economic impact. For me, that means we should opt for the softest Brexit possible, staying in the customs union and the single market.

The vast majority of jobs for my constituents and others depend on the services sector and every independent economist suggests that there will be a huge impact on our country in loss of services business if we leave the single market. For that reason alone, we should stay in the single market.

Trade remains the last great unicorn to be fully taken down. I do not believe that there will be better trade deals on offer after Brexit. We have got good trade deals as a result of membership of the EU and I look forward to supporting motion (M).

6.39 pm

Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con): What we are doing this evening is what we should have done a long time ago, at the outset of this process. Something of the magnitude of Brexit has never been attempted before anywhere else in the world. We should have put down the foundations before laying the bricks.

That said, my favoured course is to support the withdrawal agreement that the Government have negotiated, and if there is another vote on it I shall support it again.

It delivers Brexit in an orderly, non-disruptive way, and it provides the framework for revitalising the Lowestoft and East Anglian fishing industry.

In considering the various alternatives that have been suggested, I am mindful of the need to respect the 2016 referendum and I shall therefore not be voting for a second referendum or revocation of article 50. I have listened to impassioned and persuasive arguments for why we should do so, but I sense that if we go down that road we will leave a lot of people all around the country very puzzled, bewildered and, I am afraid, angry.

As a second option to the withdrawal agreement, I believe that we should consider motion (H), tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Camborne and Redruth (George Eustice). It would involve the UK remaining a member of the European economic area and returning to the European Free Trade Association, which we invented in 1959 and which involves no customs union and no backstop. That delivers on the referendum result, as the European Communities Act 1972 would be repealed on time, without an extension, and we would legally leave the EU. It also has the advantage, from my perspective, that we would leave the common fisheries policy sooner and would be able to implement the emerging policy.

With regard to leaving without a deal, I have in the past week canvassed local business, trade associations and representatives for their positions. They include businesses from the haulage, oil and gas, packaging, leisure, farming and food processing sectors, as well as health providers and utility companies. They are all concerned about the impact on their businesses of leaving the EU on WTO terms and, by implication, the potential negative knock-on impact both on those who work for them and on those to whom they provide goods and services.

In conclusion, the current logjam has been going on for far too long. We need to remove the uncertainty as quickly as possible and get on with delivering Brexit in an orderly way.

6.42 pm

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow my good friend the hon. Member for Waveney (Peter Aldous).

It is extraordinary, is it not, that we are here today? I, like others, welcome the constructive tone struck by many in this debate, but it is 27 March and we have known for so long that the end date was 29 March. This kind of debate should have been held so much earlier; to start it today is, I am afraid, a mark of failure for the whole process.

I am not one of those who can say that I have changed my mind through this process. I represent one of the most remain constituencies in the country, and I am a passionate remainer myself. I have found that difficult at times, because I recognise that many of my colleagues are in a much more difficult position.

I caution colleagues slightly about the policy discussion we are having today. Although we may well be able to move towards a rational compromise, I have wondered throughout whether that is really where many members of the public are. If I needed any proof of that, when I floated the idea of revocation in this Chamber some six months ago, it was seen, to be frank, as a bit of an outlier position. However, if I needed any confirmation

of that position, it is the extraordinary strength of the petition that has been running over the past few weeks.

I am a member of the Petitions Committee and it is unfortunate that aspersions were made earlier today on the veracity of that petition. The staff work very hard. To be frank, if Russian bots were crawling over parts of one of the campaigns during the referendum, I think we can send a strong message that they are not going to be running over the parliamentary petitions website, because we are very careful. Whatever one feels about the issue, there is strength of feeling: 27,000 people in my constituency—almost one third of the electorate—have taken the trouble to make their point. I would say that for them, remain means remain. I fear that some of the compromise positions will not satisfy people elsewhere. That leaves me to conclude, having looked at some of the intermediate options—I can see their merits from a policy perspective—that we have people who feel passionately about this issue on both sides.

How do we resolve that problem in a democracy? Frankly, I think there is only one answer—I thought the most powerful contribution this afternoon came from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett)—which is to make that plea to reconcile our differences by doing it in the way that we do best in this country: to have a sensible discussion, now that people actually know the facts. Goodness, we all know much more about all this than we did two or three years ago. I do not think we should be afraid of asking the people if they want a final say. Give it to them and they will tell us what they think.

6.45 pm

Dr Paul Williams (Stockton South) (Lab): Every one of us in this place has a firm duty to our constituents. We have a duty to protect their security and their livelihoods. We have a duty to make the best decisions for our country, and we have a duty to approach this whole process in good faith and with an open mind. This House is deeply divided, but—it is important to say this—no matter our view, all of us are acting in a way that we believe best serves our constituents and our country.

When I look at the options before the House this evening, Mr Speaker, it is obvious that there are no perfect solutions. Everything we do from now on will involve compromise. The public, like this House, are deeply divided. In a democracy, when there is division and when there are trade-offs to be made, we do not shut down the conversation. That has never been what our country does. The healthiest way to repair any kind of relationship where both sides have to stay together is to carry on talking. There is nothing threatening to democracy about testing the public's opinion. A healthy and vibrant democracy is supposed to be loud. It is supposed to discuss, to debate, and, yes, to vote. The only threat to democracy is if we allow fear and intimidation to stop this debate. That must never happen.

No Member of this House should be scared of doing the right thing today. That is the job we were all elected to do. I sometimes get messages calling me a traitor, a backstabber, an enemy of the people. Colleagues across the House receive much more vitriol than me. I know there is frustration out there, but our job as MPs is to look at the evidence and make a rational, balanced and

[Dr Paul Williams]

objective assessment. My assessment is that Brexit is far more complicated than anybody expected and we now have a duty to bring the public back into our discussions as we reach this vital, difficult stage in the process. They are entitled, in a healthy democracy, to give their informed consent to any deal agreed by Parliament.

This is a moment when the House must rise to meet the challenge in front of us: the task of uniting our divided country. So far, we have not managed that. This evening, we have the opportunity to do our country proud, to do what we know is right and to give the public the chance to help us fix this. That is why I will be supporting motion (M) in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett).

6.48 pm

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton South (Dr Williams).

I campaigned to remain not because I thought the EU was perfect, but because I inherently believe that it is better, in a 21st century world dominated by a few large blocs, to be a member of the club of our nearest neighbours, the largest and therefore the most powerful trading bloc in the world. Through our membership, we are influencing from within, sharing the costs, trading in goods and services without friction, keeping the peace on our continent and having the clout to negotiate.

I am old enough to remember, even though I was too young to vote, what being British was like before the UK joined the common market: visas to go on holiday across the channel and currency restrictions; British construction workers having to travel for work in Germany to support the German construction boom. Right now, as of this week, we get full access to EU markets, supporting world-class manufacturing jobs in Britain. We get the right to travel, work, live and love in 27 other EU countries, a right that we and millions of people, particularly those under 18 in 2016, will lose. We are already seeing the impact of the uncertainty of Brexit on a whole range of businesses in my constituency, including the growing creative sector. As night follows day, before too long we will see cuts in tax revenues leading to yet more cuts to public services, whichever party is in government.

The referendum was advisory—a simple yes or no—with little information and many lies. I voted against triggering article 50 because I felt that we should have sorted out the nature of our leaving the EU before triggering the two-year clock, so that we did not do what we are doing this week and next, scrabbling around to avoid crashing out. Let us not forget the economic and reputational consequences for this country of triggering article 50.

Many people challenge me on the manifesto phrase about respecting the results of the referendum. Well, I do respect the reasons why most people who voted leave did so—because of the lies, from which the authors distanced themselves immediately afterwards. I will be voting for motion (M) in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett) for the simple reason that any deal passed by this House—the Labour position, Norway, a customs union or the PM's deal—needs to be fully and publicly ratified

by the people, not in another advisory vote, as was the case in 2016, but this time in a binding vote. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Phil Wilson) said, people should have the chance to change their mind from leave to remain, or indeed, from remain to leave. Although my constituency voted to remain, I would probably take the same position even if my constituency was a leave-voting area because of my duty to my country.

6.51 pm

Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD): In 2016, 17.4 million people voted to leave the EU. Today, after almost three years, we still have at least six different Brexit versions in front of us. None of them was on the ballot paper for the people to vote for in 2016. Each defender of their Brexit option makes some claim that it represents the will of the people. That is why we need to test the will of the people in 2019 and to give them a specific Brexit option versus the option of staying in the EU.

Personally, I am pretty agnostic about what is a better or worse Brexit option. All I want to see as an outcome of today's exercise is that whatever Brexit option we decide on here is put back to the people. The people might reconfirm that they wish to leave the EU, but in 2019, everybody who wants to leave the EU will know exactly what they are voting for rather than there being a long wish list of hopes, aspirations and undeliverable promises. Yes, referendums are difficult, but they are democratic. We should not be threatened by those who tell us that they will riot in the streets if there is another referendum.

On Saturday, between 1 million and 2 million people marched peacefully in the streets of London—young and old, from all backgrounds, from different political parties and none. Do they not count? Are they not the real British people, determined but polite? Does Parliament listen to people only when they throw stones or send us death threats? "Put it to the people" was a peaceful ask from the biggest march so far this century. Let us hold the 2019 people's vote. Whatever Brexit solution finds a consensus in this Parliament must go back to the people. The people must finish what the people started.

Mr Speaker: I was looking for a particular Member, but he beetled out of the Chamber at an inopportune moment. If he had been in the Chamber at an opportune moment, I might have invited him to address the House, but he has missed his opportunity.

In accordance with the Order of the House of today, we will shortly proceed to vote on the motions I have selected. Voting forms are available from the Vote Office and in the Division Lobbies. The forms list the title and letter of the selected motions. The text of the motions is on the Order Paper. As I indicated at the outset, Members with surnames from A to K should hand in their forms in the Aye Lobby at the relevant desk for their surname, and Members with surnames from L to Z should hand in their forms in the No Lobby at the relevant desk. The Division bells will be rung two minutes before the House resumes. The voting period will begin at 7 o'clock and last for 30 minutes. I suspend the House accordingly for that period.

6.55 pm

Sitting suspended.

EU Exit Day Amendment

7.30 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Mr Robin Walker): I beg to move,

That the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 25 March, be approved.

First, I express my gratitude to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments for its report today. I do of course regret the necessity to have to introduce this instrument and would prefer that we were leaving the EU with a deal at the end of this week. I have voted on two occasions for that outcome, but the House has not. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster made it clear in the debate on 14 March that the Government would accept the will of the House and seek an extension if that was what Parliament voted for. Parliament then voted by 412 to 202 to approve a motion to seek to extend article 50. An extension has therefore been agreed with the EU and the Government are now committed to implementing it in domestic law.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): I want to ask the Minister about a technical point. The operative paragraph of the explanatory notes that accompany the SI says that, if the House of Commons does not approve the withdrawal agreement by 11 pm on 29 March 2019—the so-called relevant time—the treaties will instead cease to apply at the earlier date of 11 pm on 12 April 2019.

Mr Edward Vaizey (Wantage) (Con): He can read!

Mr Francois: Thank you, that is very kind. I do my best, Ed. Thanks mate.

Mr Vaizey: You are doing well.

Mr Francois: Great. I will carry on then.

The Government were meant to lay a commencement order to allow us to leave. As I understand it, they never laid such an order—I do not know whether they were ever going to. Does this SI now have the effect that the commencement order would have had? In other words, if we approve the SI and have not approved the meaningful vote, would we then leave at 11 pm on 11 April, without the need for a separate commencement order? I think the Minister understands the question.

Mr Walker: I do understand my right hon. Friend's question. The answer is that a commencement order would have to be laid before the point at which we left, whatever that leaving date was. I do not think it is necessarily directly relevant to the debate on this SI, because this SI does not set the date on which we leave the European Union but reflects the date agreed in international law.

As the House will be aware, the decision adopted by the European Council, agreed to by the UK, provides for two possible durations, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mr Francois) just pointed out: should the House approve the negotiated withdrawal agreement this week, the extension will last until 22 May; if the House does not approve the withdrawal agreement, the extension will last until 12 April.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): What would be the effect if the House rejected the SI tonight? We are constantly told that international law always trumps domestic law, so what would be the effect? Is there any point in voting for or against the motion, because it really has no effect at all? International law will always trump what we do, and in that sense parliamentary democracy is inferior to international law. Is that correct?

Mr Walker: My right hon. Friend makes an important point, but there would be a profound effect as a result of the rejection of this SI, and I shall come to that later in my speech. It is important to state that, were we to reject this SI, it would leave the UK statute book in a mess, so I do not think that is a good course of action.

Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op): The Minister referred a moment ago to the House passing the withdrawal agreement by this week. We obviously heard Mr Speaker's ruling earlier and rumours abound that the Government intend to introduce the withdrawal and implementation Bill on Friday. Could he confirm whether that is correct and whether it would have any provisions to alter section 13 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, which is of course intimately tied up with this statutory instrument?

Mr Walker: It will be a matter for the Leader of the House to announce business, not for me. I heard, as I am sure the whole Government heard, the Speaker's ruling. We take careful note of what the Speaker says and of course we will act with due respect to that. However, I hope that the House has the opportunity to consider the only withdrawal agreement that has been negotiated and agreed to by the EU.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Walker: I will make a bit of progress. The regulations cater for an extension in either scenario by redefining exit day to ensure the date and time specified in the definition is 11 pm on 22 May or 11 pm on 12 April, depending on whether the House approves the withdrawal agreement. In either of those extension scenarios, we will not be required to participate in European parliamentary elections. This vital instrument has the simple but crucial purpose of making sure that our domestic statute book reflects the extension of article 50 agreed with the EU on Friday 22 March.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Could the Minister explain this? I think the UK Government wanted 30 June but that was scaled back to 12 April. Could he explain why the EU thought that it was much better to have a short period? As someone who does not want such a period at all, I obviously find myself on the EU's side, rather than the Government's.

Mr Walker: I suspect that my right hon. Friend may well welcome the chance of that shorter period, but I think the answer is simply that that was the decision reached by the European Council and agreed by the Council and the UK.

Put simply, the instrument does not set the date of our departure, which has already been agreed. It reflects that in domestic law. While the instrument itself is straightforward, its effect will apply across the domestic

[Mr Robin Walker]

statute book, so it is important that I set out the details of what it will do—this comes to the point of my right hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh). I have explained this to my ministerial counterparts in the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly, setting out why the UK Government are taking the instrument forward.

Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk) (Con): My right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) did not ask the Minister to restate the position. He asked why the European Council went for the earlier date, rather than 30 June. Why did it do that?

Mr Walker: My understanding is that that was the Council's view of when we would have to give notice that we would be holding European elections, if we were staying in for longer, and that is why it set that date as the date by which we would have to have made our mind up as to whether we are leaving. But that is for the European Council to determine. I am not a spokesman for it.

Currently, major changes to our domestic statute book reflecting our exit from the European Union are due to take effect on exit day, which is defined in the EU withdrawal Act as 11 pm on 29 March, despite the extension terms that have been agreed at international level. These changes apply across a huge number of policy areas, from emissions trading to Europol. All these changes are designed to ensure that our statute book works when we leave the European Union, and all are due to take place on exit day. This definition has effect across the whole UK statute book. Now that an extension to article 50 has been agreed in EU and international law, we need to amend that date to reflect the new point at which the EU treaties cease to apply.

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): Has the Minister learned any lessons about putting exact times and dates on the statute book in primary legislation just so that his Prime Minister can blackmail her own party?

Mr Walker: The hon. Lady makes a political point, which is not particularly appropriate for a debate on technical legislation. The instrument has been laid under the EU withdrawal Act to do just what I said. Section 20(4) of the Act contains a power to amend exit day through a statutory instrument.

Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con): The Minister mentioned that the European Council agreed an extension. There was a resolution of this House to seek to agree an extension, which I suggest amounts to an authority to negotiate. Has he been advised that that also amounted to an authority to conclude an extension? Did he get legal advice on that point?

Mr Walker: I know that my right hon. Friend is a keen legal eagle, as well as an experienced former Minister in this Department, but of course the Government are confident of their legal position in the decisions that they have taken.

The power was specifically included in the EU withdrawal Act because parliamentarians envisaged a situation in which extension could be required. As the then Under-

Secretary said, the Government had had discussions with Back Benchers and were grateful that they tabled their amendments, which

“provide the Government with the technical ability to amend the date, but only if the UK and the EU unanimously decide to change the date at which treaties cease to apply to the UK, as set out in article 50.”—[*Official Report*, 20 December 2017; Vol. 633, c. 1155.]

Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con): Will the Minister report to the House the outcome of this afternoon's meeting of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments? Did the Committee consider the question of vires, as is within its Standing Orders?

Mr Walker: I did not catch the whole of my hon. Friend's question, but I am confident that the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has had a chance to look at the matter, and I welcomed its report at the beginning of my speech.

Let me be clear with the House that the power in the EU withdrawal Act can only be used to redefine exit day to the new day and times that the treaties will cease to apply in the UK. To specify any other day would not be a legal use of that power. It is critical that the House approves this instrument for the simple reason that the extension of article 50 has been agreed and is therefore legally binding in international law.

I understand that some Members have been of the view that we are still set to leave the EU on 29 March, but that is not legally the case. Owing to the agreement between the UK and the EU to extend article 50, the UK will remain a member state of the EU until at least 11 pm on 12 April as a matter of international law. If this instrument were not to pass, therefore, it would not change that fact, but it would lead to confusion across our statute book from 29 March.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con): I have this wonderful machine that says we are now two days, four hours, 17 minutes and 12 seconds away from coming out of the EU; this is a pretty good machine, actually. Is not the truth of the matter that, if we reject this SI tonight—I hope we do by a big margin—we will have come out in domestic law and we will be in breach of an international treaty for about two weeks, and that is why the Minister needs to get this through?

Mr Walker: I simply do not share my hon. Friend's understanding or view of the matter. I respect his point of view, but I am afraid that he is not right on the legal facts.

A large volume of EU exit legislation, preparing the statute book for the moment EU law ceases to apply, is due to enter into force automatically on exit day. Without this instrument in place, there would be a clash in our domestic law whereby contradictory provisions would apply—both EU rules and the new UK rules simultaneously. In some cases, new UK rules would replace EU rules prematurely.

We estimate that tens of thousands of amendments to our domestic legislation will be made in the light of EU exit. These include changes that relate to the sharing of information, reporting requirements placed on businesses and public institutions, and the role of the European Commission in issuing licences and certificates. For example,

let us take the amendments relating to the rights of lawyers to practise in the UK. If these regulations come into force on 29 March, EU lawyers who are not registered European lawyers immediately before exit day are at risk of committing a criminal offence if they continue to provide particular legal services in the UK. Other examples include UK operators being unable to comply with the EU emissions trading scheme and having to surrender their emissions allowances early, and the risk that firms stop trading to avoid legal breaches given their uncertainty about when new customs, excise and VAT regimes would kick in.

There are examples from across the statute book, but it is clear that without this instrument there would be significant confusion and uncertainty for businesses and individuals on 29 March.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): My hon. Friend is making the strongest possible case that this statutory instrument is important to ensure that our reputation across the world for being a country that is reliable to deal with, and whose obligations in international law are the same as our domestic legislation, remains intact.

Mr Walker: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. He and I have always agreed that we need to do this process properly and that is what this SI is all about.

Lady Hermon (North Down) (Ind): Is not the reality of the situation that, while we affectionately refer to the withdrawal deal as the Prime Minister's deal, it has been signed by 27 other EU member states? It is signed and it is not going to be unsigned: the deal is done. There is only one deal and that is the Prime Minister's deal. The extension that we need to vote for tonight is very short. We absolutely have to get behind this Brexit deal, get it through, get the implementation period and move on. The deal is not going to be reopened by the other 27.

Mr Walker: As I often find, I wholeheartedly agree with the hon. Lady. That is not the sole point of this SI, of course, because it allows for two specific scenarios, but—

Sir Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con): I wonder whether my hon. Friend can explain why, when his junior Minister, the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Kwasi Kwarteng), was asked in the House on Friday whether “the article 50 period will only be extended if the House votes for a statutory instrument to give effect to such an extension”, he confirmed:

“The Government would have to lay a statutory instrument and the House would have to debate and vote on it.”—[*Official Report*, 22 March 2019; Vol. 656, c. 1377.]

It now seems as though that was totally inaccurate.

Mr Walker: I did not see what my hon. Friend said in that debate, but I am very grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Sir Christopher Chope) for promoting me so that I have junior Ministers underneath me.

The question before us is not whether the extension to article 50 happens, but the separate question of whether the domestic statute book reflects this extension, without which there could be a confusing and unclear statute book with clashing provisions. If we are to resolve that, it is essential that this instrument is passed

before 11 pm on 29 March so that it can come into force ahead of that time. This will align exit day in UK law with the new day and time on which the EU treaties cease to apply to the United Kingdom in both EU and international law.

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): This Executive decision was approved by a Minister without proper reference to Parliament, bringing back to this House not just international law but law that is binding in our own law and binding on this Parliament. May I put it to my hon. Friend that it is exactly this kind of decision making and law making that people voted against in the referendum?

Mr Walker: My hon. Friend makes an important point on which many of us could agree—that this process reflects some of the issues that caused people to vote in the way that they did. However, the House voted for an extension and it was in respecting the vote of this House that the Government sought to negotiate one.

I am acutely aware of the huge amount of work undertaken by Members across this House to scrutinise—

Sir Christopher Chope: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Minister made light of my intervention, in which I expressly drew the attention of the House to what we had been told on Friday during an urgent question by a Minister of the Crown from his Department. If what was said then is wrong, when are we going to get an official correction and apology from the Government, because those of us who were in the House on Friday were certainly gravely misled by what was said?

Mr Speaker: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his point of order. Obviously I well remember the exchanges, and I am aware of the particular interaction to which he is referring. The normal principle applies: every Member is responsible for the veracity of what he or she says in this Chamber. If a Member inadvertently errs, it is incumbent upon that Member to correct the record. The Minister, perfectly reasonably, said that he had not seen what was said. However, it is not beyond the wit and sagacity of the hon. Member for Christchurch (Sir Christopher Chope) to arrange for a copy of the extract from the *Official Report* to wing its way to the Dispatch Box during the course of this consideration, and the Minister might then be in a position further to respond to him.

Ms Angela Eagle: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Could you advise me on whether what Conservative Members are objecting to is the use of the royal prerogative, which allows us to sign up to international treaties using that power? If so, the logic of what they are arguing is actually that we should get rid of the Queen.

Mr Speaker: I simply say to the hon. Lady that it is not for me to offer an exegesis of what individuals might think about our constitutional arrangements, including the use or otherwise of the royal prerogative, but she has made her own point in her own way, with some panache, and it will be studied in the record.

Mr Francois: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. There are some people in this House who want to get rid of Her Majesty, but they are on the Opposition Benches, not the Government Benches.

Mr Speaker: I am extraordinarily grateful to the right hon. Gentleman, but I wonder if we now might return to the relatively narrow ambit of the statutory instrument.

Mr Walker: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I shall be brief.

I am acutely aware of the huge amount of work undertaken by Members across the House to scrutinise the near 550 statutory instruments brought forward to prepare for exit and provide legal certainty. If this instrument were not to pass, that work would be undermined by the legal uncertainty created. If, on the other hand, we passed today's instrument, the only thing that would change across all those SIs is the moment at which they come into force, aligning with the time of our exit so that they work properly.

I remain hopeful that the House will support the Prime Minister's deal and that we will leave the EU on 22 May, with a short technical extension to ensure that we can pass the necessary implementing legislation. This instrument is, however, without prejudice to whether that is the case. I hope the House can agree on the necessity of this instrument and approve it, so that it can come into force and we can avoid serious confusion and uncertainty for businesses and individuals.

7.50 pm

Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): I rise on behalf of the Opposition to support the motion. As the Minister made clear, this statutory instrument is a necessary one, and it should be entirely uncontroversial. As the House knows, in response to the Prime Minister's letter of 20 March to the President of the European Council, the Council agreed to an extension of the article 50 process until 22 May, provided that the withdrawal agreement is approved by the House this week. The Council further agreed that if the withdrawal agreement is not approved this week, an extension until 12 April will take place to allow for the UK to "indicate a way forward" for its consideration, to which we hope the preceding debate and votes will contribute.

On 22 March, the UK's permanent representative to the EU, Sir Tim Barrow, wrote to the President of the European Council to confirm agreement of the proposed extension arrangement under article 50(3) of the treaty on European Union. As such, the extension of the article 50 process until at least 12 April will now happen as a matter of European law, and as the Minister said, it is legally binding in international law. This statutory instrument merely aligns "exit day" as it is defined for the purposes of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 with the new dates that have been agreed. It is entirely correct that it comes after agreement on extension was reached between the two parties.

Indeed, the withdrawal Act makes clear that this sequencing—that is to say, that any new agreement between the parties as to when the treaties cease to apply to the UK must precede any change to exit day for the purposes of the Act—is precisely what is required. Section 20(4) of the Act provides that a Minister of the Crown may by regulations amend the definition of "exit day" to

"ensure that the day and time specified in the definition are the day and time that the Treaties are to cease to apply to the United Kingdom"—

the operative word being "are", not the day and time that the Government hope the EU Council would agree to. As such, logically, the Act makes clear that the Government could not propose a statutory instrument that would stipulate a date or dates for exit day different from the date on which the treaties would cease to apply, as agreed at the time. In short, the power to redefine exit day as set out in the 2018 Act passed by this House arises only if the date has already been changed.

Mr Bone: The Act refers to a date. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it would therefore be more logical for this statutory instrument to state 12 April, and if that date needs to be changed, it should be changed subsequently? I do not understand how we can have two dates in the statutory instrument.

Matthew Pennycook: I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising that point, as he has in recent days. I think that it can be done either day—that is the short answer. There are different legal opinions on which creates the least amount of confusion and potential for legal challenge, but the Government have decided to do it this way, and we support the statutory instrument as a means to do so.

Those who take issue with the sequencing or the mere fact that this statutory instrument is before us at all today do so because they oppose in principle an extension to the Brexit process beyond Friday 29 March, presumably because they are either relaxed about leaving without a deal or positively wish for such an outcome.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): I am grateful for the Opposition's support. Is not the bottom line that we are extending article 50 via this SI tonight to avoid the damaging no-deal exit that my constituents in Winchester, and I am sure the hon. Gentleman's constituents, do not want to see, and that this House has now expressly said on several occasions—I predict it will do so again this evening—it does not want to see?

Matthew Pennycook: I agree with the hon. Gentleman to the extent that we have to do everything possible to avoid a disastrous no-deal exit. This SI does not do that; the extension agreed by the European Council and the UK does it. This SI ensures that our domestic legislation aligns with what has already been agreed and that we do not create legal confusion.

It is certainly the case that no one, including those who have no problem with the extension, expected that this Government would fail so miserably that an extension of any kind would be required, but it was always a possibility. That is precisely why the EU withdrawal Bill, at least in its original form, was drafted to provide for circumstances in which a withdrawal agreement came into force later than 29 March, following an extension. As the Government themselves put it at the time in their delegated powers memorandum:

"Exit day will be dependent on the withdrawal negotiations with the EU."

As my hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle) has commented, it was the Government's decision to play politics with the issue of exit day for the purposes of our domestic legislation—constraining the flexibility provided for in the original drafting of the Bill by putting in a fixed exit date and time in a vain attempt to

curry favour with the hardliners on their own Benches—that means we require a statutory instrument in the form before us. That said, it remains the case that it is simply not reasonable to question the legitimacy of the Government's actions in agreeing to an extension to the article 50 process or the fact that these regulations have sequentially followed that agreement.

Sir Bernard Jenkin: I want to correct the hon. Gentleman's account of recent history. In fact, the Government agreed to put in the date voluntarily, and then were blackmailed by the remain faction in our party to provide flexibility on the date. That is actually what happened.

Matthew Pennycook: I think the hon. Gentleman would agree with me that the original draft of the Bill did not include the date. The reasons why the Government put it in and the actions of the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) in again helpfully coming to the rescue, I will leave to the hon. Gentleman and his view of what happened at the time.

It follows that, if the House votes against this statutory instrument, it cannot prevent an extension of the article 50 process until at least one of the two proposed dates. In short, and much to my delight, there is nothing that right hon. and hon. Members on the Conservative Benches can do today to force the UK out of the EU in two days' time. All that would be achieved by voting against these regulations would be immense legal confusion, with two parallel sets of regulations in place—those deriving specifically and directly from EU law, and those made under the 2018 Act, which would diverge from it. As the Minister put it, our statute book would be in a complete mess. That is why this statutory instrument should self-evidently be supported, and why the Opposition will be doing so when we divide on it.

7.57 pm

Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con): The first point I would like to raise is about the ministerial code and the actions of the Prime Minister. It is quite clear under the ministerial code—I am glad to see the Attorney General sitting on the Front Bench—that the Law Officers must be consulted in good time before the Government are committed to critical decisions involving legal considerations. Even if I was prepared to concede, which I am not, that the Law Officers do not necessarily have to divulge their opinions—actually, the Attorney General was obliged to do so by a resolution of the House on 4 December 2018—the question is whether, as a matter of fact, the Prime Minister, who today and two days ago resolutely refused to answer me, had consulted the Law Officers. I asked her that, but she twice refused to tell me, and the inference is that she did not do so. Is this not misleading the House? That question worries me intensely.

Having dealt with that serious issue, I also have to say that I take the strongest possible exception, as do many other distinguished lawyers, QCs and former judges, to the Government's action in entering into a binding agreement in international law, which purportedly alters the UK's exit date from the European Union in advance of the votes in each House on the draft regulations, the effect of which would alter exit day in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

It has been suggested that the Act provides that the draft regulations can only be submitted to each House for affirmative resolution once the date of exit has been altered at international level. That is simply not correct. The provision for approval by affirmative resolution is free-standing in paragraph 14 of schedule 7, under which a draft instrument is to be submitted to both Houses. It was incumbent on the Government to respect the normal practice of allowing Parliament to approve any legislative changes before entering into a binding international obligation.

I was the shadow Attorney General during the Iraq debacle. On that occasion, it became apparent that there should have been consultation with Parliament on a matter of the gravest national importance. If I may say so, I obliged, or created the circumstances in which the then Attorney General submitted his opinion to the House. More recently, we had a similar situation with regard of the bombing of Syria. The idea that Parliament is not required to postpone approval of any legislative changes until we enter into a binding international obligation is well established in recent precedent.

The course that the Government have taken seeks to present Parliament with a fait accompli whereby Parliament is pressured to approve the draft regulations because, the Minister alleges, failure to do so would cause disconformity between the UK's international obligations and domestic law.

Under our constitutional law, the power of the UK Government to conclude binding agreements with states and other international actors such as the European Union exists under the royal prerogative. It is a basic principle of our constitutional law that the royal prerogative may only be exercised consistently with the intention of Parliament. Any purported exercise of the royal prerogative that is inconsistent with the intention of Parliament is unlawful and of no effect in our internal legal order.

I am troubled by what could be the outcome of the meeting of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments today. That is why I intervened on the Minister. I asked whether there was proper consideration of whether the matters before it were *intra vires* or *ultra vires*. I do not know the answer because I have not been given the information. I ask the Minister to check whether the Committee considered the question of *vires* in relation to the issues before it today.

The intention of Parliament is to be found solely in Acts of Parliament. It is not shown by resolutions of the House of Commons. Unless an Act of Parliament says otherwise, such resolutions do not have effect. Under the principles of public international law, in article 46 of the Vienna convention, a state is entitled to invoke the fact that its apparent consent to be bound by an international agreement has been expressed in violation of a provision of its internal law, if that violation is manifest, which is defined as “objectively evident”, and concerns a rule of internal law of fundamental importance. Those criteria are clearly satisfied, so there is manifest violation of our internal constitutional law. The Government's actions are completely unlawful.

It is abominable that we should be faced with having to vote on the specious ground of so-called uniformity, which the Minister has presented. I do not blame him personally. I ask him to forgive me for suggesting that

[*Sir William Cash*]

he is taking advice from other persons who purport to be learned in the law. I am afraid that they are entirely wrong.

Only yesterday, Lord Pannick himself raised those very questions. Lord Pannick, of course, is a most distinguished lawyer. In fact, he was the lawyer for the plaintiff Gina Miller in the case that resulted in the requirement for the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017. Lord Pannick knows what he is doing. In fact, I and others instructed him in relation to the Rees-Mogg case back in 1993, so I know a little bit about the brilliance of Lord Pannick. He said:

“The legal concern which some lawyers have expressed is that a power to specify the day and time when the treaties are to cease to apply is not satisfied by identifying two possibilities; it is not possible, if this SI is enacted, to identify exit day simply by reading it.”—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 26 March 2019; Vol. 796, c. 1721.]

It is worth considering the fact that Lord Pannick is not to be taken for granted and that he has raised serious doubts about the matter.

Mr Speaker: But I think the House will be relieved to know that it is to be spared a dilation on the matter of Lord Pannick’s involvement in the Rees-Mogg case—of which sparing I think I can be comfortably reassured by the hon. Gentleman.

Sir William Cash: Absolutely. I do not need to dilate on that question at all; I am simply using it as a point of reference. The draft regulations contain unlawful sub-delegation.

Adam Afriyie (Windsor) (Con): If what my hon. Friend says turns out to be the case and the Government did take the decision unlawfully or outwith the scope of this place, what would be the consequences?

Sir William Cash: The regulations are not binding and they are invalid in law—it is as simple as that. This is a serious matter. Let us view the question from the point of view of people listening to this debate outside Parliament. This is not just a question of process. It is about the fact that as I speak, under the provisions of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act, we intend to repeal the European Communities Act 1972 on exit day, which is 29 March. That is the law of the land, subject only to this rather esoteric question about the commencement order, which can be resolved in 30 seconds by a Minister coming to the Dispatch Box and saying, “This commencement order is now in force.” It is as simple as that. It does not require anything more than that.

We are talking about something that goes to the heart of the referendum decision itself—the democratic decision of the British people—which was that they wanted to leave the European Union. By the way, the House of Commons voted by 499 to about 120 for the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act. It also voted for the European Union Referendum Act 2015 and gave the British people the right to make that decision. Contrary to the rubbish I hear all over certain parts of the House—that somehow or other remainers in Parliament have a right to take back that decision from the people—it was given to them and 17.4 million made it. This Parliament has no right to take it back from them.

Mr Richard Bacon: I never knew we were going to have such a treat this evening, so it is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to ask my hon. Friend a question. It so happens that I have a copy of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 with me. It does say in schedule 7—[*Interruption.*] Actually, Mr Speaker, it was completely by chance, because I had no idea that my hon. Friend was going to dilate on this matter. I heard the hon. Member for Brent North (Barry Gardiner) saying, first of all, the word “deviation” as if this were some sort of BBC panel show. Then I heard him, from a sedentary position, saying that he had no idea what my hon. Friend was talking about. It turns out that schedule 7(14) states very clearly:

“A statutory instrument containing regulations under section 20(4)—

for the benefit of the hon. Member for Brent North, that is the section of the Act by which exit day is changed, so it is hardly a deviation—

“may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.”

It occurs to me—I invite my hon. Friend to agree with me—that my hon. Friend is doing an enormous service to this House.

Sir William Cash: I am extremely indebted to my very good and very close hon. Friend. I am so glad that he has made that point, because I am simply trying to do what I have always tried to do, which is to get past all the fog and ask the central question, which bears on the issue of the sovereignty of this House in relation to that European Union (Referendum) Act 2015, which gave the right to the British people.

The 2018 Act, to which my hon. Friend refers, is the moment in time when we made that decision in this House. Even my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) voted for the Third Reading of that Act. This was, therefore, a decision taken by this Parliament. So forget the fact that these indicative votes going on at the moment, which I regard as a parliamentary bag of liquorice allsorts, are an obfuscation of the fundamental issues. The draft regulations published a few days ago are not in accordance with the 2018 Act, since they do not change exit day to a particular date. Instead, they purport to change exit day to two different dates—the point Lord Pannick referred to—depending on whether the House does or does not pass a resolution that satisfies the European Council decision. I emphasise the words “does not satisfy the European Council decision”, Mr Speaker.

I have raised this matter repeatedly. We have been supplicating the EU. We have given in to the EU. My European Scrutiny Committee last March published a very good report in which we pointed out that we should not accept the terms of reference dictated to us by the European Union. That is where it all went wrong. It went wrong when the European Union (Withdrawal) Act was overtaken by the Chequers agreement, in a pre-planned operation inside No. 10 driven by the Prime Minister and her advisers, the effect of which was to undermine the repeal of the 1972 Act. I say “pre-planned” because the 2018 Act received Royal Assent on 26 June and within 10 days the Chequers proposals had come forward, which morphed into the withdrawal agreement and article 4, the effect of which is to make us subjugated to the rule making of the European Union. That is what went on and it was

done deliberately. It was going on while we were actually passing the withdrawal Act itself. I would describe it as a monstrous deceit on the British people.

I will go further. The course taken by the Government in seeking to pre-empt the affirmative resolution has definitely contaminated the lawfulness of their actions. It has, at a minimum, created serious doubts about the legal situation. I draw attention, for those who would be interested, to the views of the retired Lord Justice of Appeal, Sir Richard Aikens, who is entirely clear on this question.

I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister yesterday. I have not yet had a reply. She has not, in fact, answered my question about the ministerial code, which I have asked twice. As far as I am concerned, this statutory instrument should be voted down. I invite the Attorney General to explain whether, as a matter of fact—irrespective of whether he is prepared to disclose his advice, which I think he should publish—the Prime Minister did consult him, as required under the ministerial code.

8.14 pm

Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP): It seems that we are not to leave the European Union on 29 March after all. Let me begin by offering my commiserations to the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mr Francois) and his associates in the European Research Group; I appreciate that this must be a difficult time. I fear that commemorative memorabilia may need to be scrapped, the champagne orders may need to be cancelled, and indeed, the bunting will have to be put back in the attic as freedom day celebrations are cancelled throughout the land. It seems to me that the inconvenience and disappointment of the hard-right faction in this Parliament is a small price to pay, to see if we can save the country from catastrophe.

The gravity of the situation means that this is not a moment for *schadenfreude*, so I shall refrain from seeking any pleasure in the disappointment of others, but we need to point out that the fact that we are discussing this statutory instrument tonight can only be seen as nothing other than the abject humiliation of the British Government in this process—not only because on more than 100 occasions, they have foolishly come to the Dispatch Box and reassured us that we would be leaving the European Union on 29 March, but because, that having proven impossible, they now come and offer us a timetable that is not of their design but is one that is imposed on them. If that is not humiliation, I do not know what is.

As so many Members have said in recent debates on this matter, the Government have only themselves to blame. The fact that this SI seeking an extension to the process is before us tonight is entirely a consequence of how the Government have conducted the process. From the word go, they were not interested in anyone's opinion but their own. The dialogue about how to implement the 2016 referendum result was constrained only to the voices within the minority Conservative Government and their allies in the Democratic Unionist party, who I see are absent from our proceedings tonight. That is shocking, because what they should have done was to try to reach some sort of national consensus on how to proceed in this most divided of countries. However, that is what they did, and of course, in the middle of it, they called a general election and the Prime Minister

asked the British people for a mandate to support the manner in which she was discharging the referendum result, and the British people refused to give it to her. Anyone might have thought that that point would be the time to change tack, take stock and perhaps readjust—but no. They simply circled the wagons closer, bunkered down and spent the past two years negotiating with the European Union without reference to or a mandate from this Parliament. That is why we are in this situation today.

What happens next is the real question. If we have the delay granted that the statutory instrument suggests, what will we do with the time that is afforded to us? To my mind, that entirely depends on whether the Government wish to go forward with this Parliament in good faith or in bad faith.

A bad faith way to go forward would be to regard the debates that we have had today, and may well have in future, as some sort of inconvenient sideshow—an irritation to be dispensed with—before the Government come back yet again with a failed agreement, unaltered, to put before the House. That would be bad faith, and I think we saw some of that earlier on today when they tried to prevent us from having the debates that we had this afternoon in the first place. It was not a good look, and it is interesting that Parliament rejected the Government's position today by an even bigger majority than we did on Monday. I would caution the Government to have some humility now in how they proceed. A good faith way to proceed would be to try to reach out and agree a new political consensus with other voices in this Parliament and in this country, including, in particular, other political parties and the devolved Administrations within the United Kingdom. That would be good faith.

This is a little surreal, because we are discussing what to do with the timetable before we know the outcome of the votes that we had earlier on, so I do not know yet what the mood of Parliament is on the various options that were put before it. That said, I am concerned that, when the Government have talked about how they might respond to those decisions and debates, they have suggested that they could not contemplate supporting anything they regarded as undeliverable. We can all accept that everything has practical consequences and that we have to come up with proposals that are practical and can be implemented, but I rather fear that “undeliverable” in this context means anything that conflicts with the draft withdrawal agreement. If so, it is another conceit to deny the will of Parliament.

The whole purpose of this exercise is that, having voted down the draft withdrawal agreement by such large majorities, we are genuinely engaged in a process to find a route to a majority by some other means.

Sandy Martin (Ipswich) (Lab): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the one thing that is genuinely undeliverable is a no-deal Brexit? We do not have the trading mechanisms to make it possible to deliver a no-deal Brexit and retain the stability of the country.

Tommy Sheppard: That is self-evidently true.

What is deliverable is to go back to the EU, remove the red lines and seek a new set of discussions with a new objective. My belief is that the EU would respond warmly to any such approach. To those concerned

[Tommy Sheppard]

about being caught up in a process where the EU is placing constraints on what we can do, I say that our salvation is in our own hands, because we need only revoke the notice we served under article 50, pause the situation and take control of the process, without constraint or qualification or conditions being set by the EU or anyone else. That is a sensible move that the Government ought to consider. It was, of course, an unpardonable folly to trigger article 50 in the first place, without having the first clue where we were going, which is why I and my colleagues at the time voted against it.

Doing that will take time. Unfortunately, what we have before us tonight is only an interim measure, because it does not get rid of the cliff edge; it just pushes it a few weeks into the future. I am sure that we will have to come back to debate further statutory instruments and legislation to allow us properly to change direction and negotiate a better agreement with the EU, but that will take time; it will not be done by 22 May. We might as well acclimatise ourselves to the fact that to get a better outcome we will need a long and significant delay, which means preparing to fight European elections on 23 May 2019.

I am becoming increasingly alarmed. It seems to be the people who wish to deny the people of the UK any say on the outcome of the negotiations who are terrified at the prospect of facing the electorate on 23 May and asking them who they want to represent them in the EU. I do not understand how the Government negotiated an agreement that provided for this country not to be represented in the power structures of the EU during a transitional period of up to two years. That is ridiculous. We might stay, or we might leave the EU, but for as long as we are there, people in the UK have an equal right to be represented in those structures as people in any of the other 27 member states. We should acclimatise ourselves now to the idea of fighting those elections.

That would be a good thing. It would be embarrassing for some people who thought we would have it all done and dusted by now, but it is taking a little longer than people thought, so, as we take whatever time is required, we should be represented. I would predict two things if we have these elections on 23 May. The first is that the turnout would be considerably greater than the 35% in 2014. The second—I hope to be judged on it—is that the main loser will be the UK Independence party, which fluked the result last time.

Whether or not people respond to those elections will depend on how this Parliament approaches them. If we are seen to be dragged kicking and screaming to the ballot boxes, that will not be a good look, but if we embrace the opportunity for people in this country to have their democratic say, we may be able to change completely the narrative on how this matter is being addressed. We may be able to get rid of much of the ill-tempered debate that has taken place and begin the process of political healing. That is why we will offer no objection to the statutory instrument, but let me also say that it is only one small step along a much longer road that we now need to take.

8.25 pm

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): The mood outside the House is overwhelmingly that we should get on with it. The nation heard the Prime Minister and the Government

promise on countless occasions that we would be leaving on 29 March 2019, with or without a deal. It is true that the Prime Minister always said that she wanted a deal and expected to get a deal, but she never ruled out leaving without a deal, and she was right not to do so. Indeed, for many months she used to say, “No deal is better than a bad deal,” leaving open the possibility that what was on offer would be so bad that it would be better just to leave.

I am not someone who thinks that we should just leave. I think that we should leave with a series of deals, and I am pleased that the Government have put place the essential deals that we need in order to leave. Of course we needed an aviation deal, a haulage deal, a Government procurement deal and all the rest of it, and those things have been sorted out, I am told, over the long two years and eight months that have elapsed since the original vote. I am also pleased that the Government, in parallel with constantly telling us that they would get an agreement and an agreement that we would like, continued their so-called no-deal planning, which, as I have said, is actually many-deal planning—that is, planning a series of lesser deals to ensure that things worked smoothly and that we were in a good position and had options.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

John Redwood: I wish to develop my argument a little.

The Government put us in that position. What we have not heard, either from the Minister or, more importantly, from the Prime Minister, who is responsible for this, is the case for the delay that we are now being asked to approve in United Kingdom legislation. It seems to be mainly geared to the idea that the House will accept the withdrawal agreement after we should have left, rather than before we were going to leave, but we now learn that the deal that was actually offered did not allow the Government until May or early June to put the thing through. The EU was very tough on the Government, saying, “You must get the withdrawal agreement through before the official leaving date of 29 March, under the previous understanding,” which leaves the Government with only a couple of days in which to do so.

The question to the Government must be, “Why has it taken so long to get this agreement into a shape that the House would pass, and why have you been so dilatory about presenting, or re-presenting the agreement?” or, even better, “Why did you not renegotiate it to get it into a form in which it might be worth considering again?” The question that you have rightly posed to the Government, Mr Speaker, is whether there is any point in constantly bringing the same thing back time and again when the answer continues to be negative. The Government have not really explained today, in the context of their wish for a delay, why the outcome would suddenly be different after they have left it for so long and why they left it so long if it was so time-critical. They have had plenty of months between the original Chequers disaster, when they first adumbrated this policy and there were mass resignations from the Government and the Conservative party and today, when—many more resignations later—there is still a considerable reluctance on the part of sections of the governing party to vote for the withdrawal agreement.

I fear that I am not free to support this proposal. I do not think that a good case has been made for delay, and I do not think that the Government have made a case to the public for why we have to be let down when such a clear promise was embedded in the law—in the withdrawal Act that this Parliament passed. I suggest to the Government that they should think again about how they wish to use the time that they are trying to buy.

I have a lot of sympathy with my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) over the crowning irony of the position the Government have placed us in. They are claiming superior European law to do something the leave majority in this country does not want them to do, but they are not so sure of their legal ground that they want this House to actually endorse it, because they know otherwise there might be legal difficulties, but to do it on the very piece of legislation that is taking back control. It is almost unbelievable.

This House has rightly decided to back the vote of the British people and by a solemn statute say that we are taking back control and from the day that that comes into effect all laws and matters relating to Government and public business will be settled in this House of Commons and not by the EU. And we are now told that the Prime Minister can have a conversation in an evening Council meeting in Brussels and be pushed off her request and given something completely different from her request, and we are told that trumps anything the UK Parliament does. Well, if we wanted to sum up why 17.4 million people voted the way they did, we could not do better than take that example. We do not want this House sidelined or presumed upon; this House should decide when we leave the European Union and that should not have been settled in that way.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: I call Sir Bernard—oh, I do beg the pardon of the hon. Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle): I call Angela Eagle, and then other colleagues. I remind the House that there are fewer than 25 minutes to go.

8.31 pm

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

We have seen today elements of the Conservative party in high dungeon, or dudgeon—[*Interruption.*] Maybe they should be in the high dungeon. We have seen them in high dudgeon about the fact that the Minister has brought a statutory instrument before us today to take away the cliff edge they were relying on plunging this country over in order to get the kind of clean break, catastrophe Brexit that many of them secretly want. I never thought in this House that I would sit here and see considerable numbers of Members of a Government party—the party opposite—planning on that basis to cause such damage to our economic prospects and the prospects for prosperity of all of my constituents and everybody else's constituents; it is a period of history that I hoped I would never see.

The Prime Minister is entirely responsible for getting all of us into the mess we have seen develop over the last few months as she has repeatedly, after putting a definite leaving date on the face of the original withdrawal Act, put off the vote and put off the vote on her withdrawal agreement because she wanted, I believe, to face this House with an unpalatable choice between her deal,

which many from all parts of the House have serious problems with, and the catastrophe of no deal. In a modern, mature Parliament I believe that that kind of process and choice should never be allowed to face us. Whether we voted leave or remain—whichever side of the argument we were on in 2016—we should not have been put in that position, and it was the date on the face of what is now the withdrawal Act that allowed the Prime Minister to have the leverage that she somehow thought would work to her advantage.

The Prime Minister has now been forced to resort to the leverage that we hear happened at the 1922 committee tonight, where she basically said “Back me so you can then sack me,” and gave another date, 22 May, for when she would announce her departure. So now, while the country's future is still in the air and not decided, we have the horrible, self-regarding spectacle of the next runners and riders in the Conservative party seeing who will inherit the poisoned chalice that the Tory psychodrama of Brexit has injected into the body politic in this country.

The Minister's statutory instrument is an inevitable consequence of creating a false cliff edge. That cliff edge was created for blackmail purposes, but there remain many sensible, responsible people on both sides of the House, and we have expressed our wish not to allow the country to plunge over it. The Minister was correct to bring forward the statutory instrument, and to surmise that this Parliament will not allow a choice involving the catastrophe Brexit of leaving with no deal. We will not allow this or any future Prime Minister to blackmail this country with such appalling, disrespectful and dangerous tactics.

I will support the Minister's statutory instrument tonight. I hope that in due course we will be able to have a much longer delay, to start the process again and to do it properly with some of the respect that we have seen developing in today's indicative votes debate and with the responsible, cross-party debate that is beginning to develop and which should have happened in this country when the Prime Minister crossed the threshold of Downing Street two years ago. She has got the process exactly the wrong way round. Permanent damage has been done to our economy, our prospects, our prosperity and, more than anything else, our reputation in the world, because this Prime Minister has got this so disastrously wrong. Whoever her successor is, I hope that they will not take this to be a place that can be blackmailed, as she has done, and that they will not play Russian roulette with the prosperity and future of this country. Anyone who decides that that is a reasonable way to behave does not deserve the honour of being our Prime Minister.

8.37 pm

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): The hon. Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle) gave the game away when, amid all her hyperbole and rhetoric, she betrayed her desire for a “much longer delay”. That is what the remain majority in this House really want. I was rather shocked to hear the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Matthew Pennycook) say that this measure should be entirely uncontroversial. He might not have been listening, but millions of our voters certainly have been listening and they were expecting to leave the EU on 29 March. For them, this debate comes as a very great disappointment, because this order cancels exit day on 29 March. The way in which the Council decision

[*Sir Bernard Jenkin*]

was agreed illustrates exactly why people voted to leave the EU, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) set out.

History will mark this day as the moment when this House decided to start to turn against the decision to leave the EU and against the mandate upon which most MPs in this House were elected—[*Interruption.*] Oh yes, there are exceptions, but I am talking about the 85% of votes that were cast for pro-Brexit parties. So far, the EU's withdrawal agreement has been rejected for good reasons, not least because it is so far from taking back control over our laws, borders and trade. That is one point on which I agree with the hon. Member for Edinburgh East (Tommy Sheppard). In fact, if this statutory instrument goes through, the next time the Minister brings an order to this House to implement an EU directive, decision or regulation, there will probably have been no UK Minister sitting at the table in Brussels to agree that decision, or even to be there to be outvoted. That decision will just have been handed down through the withdrawal agreement.

I have never considered myself a populist or a man of the people, but it is only those like me, who will vote against this decision to cancel leaving the EU on 29 March, who are truly representing what the British people decided in the referendum. We are the real majority in this House, but we are sorely under-represented by its Members.

Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con) *rose—*

Hannah Bardell (Livingston) (SNP) *rose—*

Sir Bernard Jenkin: I am going to press on.

This House has now embarked upon an unprincipled constitutional experiment. The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which I chair, recently heard from a retired Lord Chief Justice that nothing like this experiment has occurred since the recasting of the role of Parliament in 1688, which shows just how radical it is. I recognise the sincerity of many right hon. and hon. Members involved in the experiment, but they have resorted to the most questionable constitutional methods, which leave no Government or anyone else accountable for what is being decided. Who will the voters now hold to account for the outcome of the Brexit question?

Moreover, the process has been supported by those either embarking upon embellishing the discredited withdrawal agreement with ever greater restrictions on our right of national democratic self-determination or seeking to disrupt Brexit or stop it altogether in defiance of the manifesto promises upon which most of us were elected. I therefore regret to conclude on these matters, including these regulations, that this House is left with questionable democratic legitimacy.

Sir William Cash: I absolutely endorse what my hon. Friend has said. I remind Members, including those on the Conservative Benches, that they voted consistently for the Acts of Parliament, including the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, that will give effect to all the enactments and that to pursue such an objective is effectively to reverse their decisions on specious and unacceptable grounds.

Sir Bernard Jenkin: I agree with my hon. Friend. I will vote against these regulations, and let me say something about the mess that we are now in. I can fairly claim to be one of the minority in this House who were the authors of the voters' referendum decision, and I am proud of that. Most of us who voted leave have stuck with what we believe, one way or another. We are not the authors of what the remain majority in this House, with the Government, have made of Brexit, nor of what they continue to inflict upon our sad and disillusioned voters.

8.42 pm

Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP): I cannot promise that I will speak without hesitation, repetition or deviation, and I probably will not limit myself to a minute, but I will do my best on all those counts. An extension to the exit day is a good thing for several reasons, but the extension that has been asked for, which we are discussing tonight, is not the one that we should be faced with, and I want to look back at how we got into this mess.

Several Members have mentioned the fact that people are expecting us to leave on 29 March. However, when people voted in the June 2016 referendum, not one person mentioned 29 March 2019 as exit day, nor did they mention 12 April or 22 May. The people voted either to remain in or leave the EU. That was the proposition, and there was no discussion of the actual exit day. While I am on the subject, nobody during the referendum expected that the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) would now be the Prime Minister. No one expected this deal to be the deal before Parliament, because that was not discussed during the course of the referendum, and it is absolutely wrong for anyone to say that it represents the settled will of the UK people.

Mr Bone: I remind the hon. Lady that David Cameron said that if the referendum resulted in the UK leaving, he would trigger article 50 the day after. He did not do that, and he resigned.

Kirsty Blackman: The article 50 process is a two-year period with the possibility of extension. Triggering article 50 does not mean we leave exactly two years afterwards. There is a negotiation period, and anybody with an ounce of sense, for a start, would not have triggered article 50 until they were in a position to negotiate something with which Parliament and the people would agree, and they would have negotiated extensions so we do not leave before we are ready.

Anna Soubry: I am not aware of David Cameron ever having said that he would trigger article 50 the day after the referendum.

Mr Bone: He did.

Anna Soubry: I just said I am not aware of it, but I am certainly aware of the Leader of the Opposition saying it.

I am sure the hon. Member for Aberdeen North (Kirsty Blackman) paid a lot of attention to the leave campaign. Does she remember the leave campaign making it very clear to the British people that we would not be leaving the European Union before a deal on our future relationship had been secured? That absolutely has not been done by this Government.

Kirsty Blackman: The right hon. Lady, as ever, is absolutely correct. People were promised a number of unicorns, and a number of Conservative Members still believe those unicorns exist—they are wandering around and waiting in vain for those unicorns to emerge. The problem is that the unicorns do not exist and have never existed. Promises were made to the people of these islands that could never have been met.

One of our biggest issues in this whole situation is that the red lines have been adhered to with some kind of iron grip. The red lines created the Chequers agreement. If anyone sensible had been in the Prime Minister's shoes, they would have said that the most important thing for our economy is to have a deal that protects services, because services are 80% of the UK economy. Instead, the Prime Minister said, "The most important thing for me is to crack down on freedom of movement, so I will do everything I can to ensure that freedom of movement is cracked down on, rather than to ensure that the economy is protected." That red line was ridiculous from the beginning.

The reason we are in this situation on the exit date—it would be great if the Minister could make this clear in his summing up, if he does sum up—is because of the Prime Minister's ridiculous red line on the European elections. It is ridiculous that it should be laid down that we refuse to take part in the European elections. My party is ready, willing and able to take part in the elections, and I think we would do rather well. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh East (Tommy Sheppard) that UKIP would see its number of votes and its number of seats reduced. I was shocked to hear the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) suggest that the Labour party should be courting those UKIP voters and trying to get people who used to vote UKIP but who now vote Labour to stay on board. Frankly, I would rather not have those votes if I were given the option.

The Government lack preparedness. The Secretary of State for Scotland suggested this morning that the Scottish Government "have not embraced Brexit" and are therefore not prepared for the Prime Minister's deal to happen in the event of Brexit. The UK Government are also not prepared for Brexit. That is why they are having to ask for an extension. Even if the Prime Minister's deal had been approved, or were to be approved this week, they are still not prepared for Brexit to happen.

I sit on the European Statutory Instruments Committee, which did not meet this Tuesday because there were no proposed negative instruments for it to discuss, and the Committee does not propose to sit next Tuesday because there are no proposed negative instruments for it to discuss. I have been asking whether that means there are no proposed negative instruments left, but apparently it means we are not getting a recess and the Committee will sit the week after next to discuss them.

The UK Government have failed at every opportunity to prepare adequately, and they have set absolutely unreasonable red lines. What they should be doing now is going to the EU and saying, "We need a longer extension so we can adequately prepare, and we are happy to take part in the EU elections as a result." My preferred position is that we should have a people's vote, with the people given a clear choice between remaining in the EU and whatever deal this House would like to put to them.

Hannah Bardell: My hon. Friend is making an excellent speech, summing up brilliantly the exact guddle that this Conservative Government have got themselves into. Is it not the worst kind of loser who blames their opposition or opponent for their own mess? Not only are this Government completely screwing up the Brexit negotiations and the whole of the UK, but they are asleep at the wheel in government and cannot even replace their disability Minister, thus offending and not properly representing people with disabilities across the UK. It is utterly shameful.

Kirsty Blackman: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct: this is a complete mess, and not only over things such as not being able to replace the disability Minister. I understand that the Prime Minister has lost 28 Ministers; the previous three Prime Ministers reached a combined total of losing that many Ministers.

The last issue I wish to raise is the fact that EU settled status is not sorted out. People's jobs, livelihoods and living standards—people's lives—are being put at risk by the decisions and lack of preparedness of this Government. But we will be supporting this SI and supporting the extension, although it should be a longer one.

8.50 pm

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): I will try to be brief, so that my right hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Mr Vaizey) can get in, too.

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): And me.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Gentleman also wishes to contribute, so I know that the right hon. Gentleman will exercise an enormous self-denying ordinance.

Mr Francois: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Tonight, we are debating whether or not to extend article 50. The thing I would like to touch on briefly is whether the EU would ever countenance a further extension. I say that because from 2007 to 2010, when we were on the Opposition Benches, I was my party's shadow Europe Minister. I did the Lisbon treaty, working with William Hague, and that was my epiphany; we had 14 days' debate in this place and we could not change a single punctuation mark. That was when I realised that we had to leave. I hope the Minister will accept that in those three years I spent a lot of time visiting the institutions of the European Union, because that was my job. I came to realise that for many people in the EU, particularly, though not exclusively, in the Commission, what is often referred to as the "European project" has the status almost of a religious act of faith. People passionately believe in it, it transcends almost all other considerations and it must be promoted and protected almost at all costs. Very many people in the EU were utterly shocked when the UK voted to leave. They were absolutely stunned, because in their world what we had done was an act of heresy—it was apostasy to leave.

Many people in the EU believe we should be punished, not least pour encourager les autres. But what they are even more worried about is the UK taking part in European elections, which would bring 73 UK MEPs into the Parliament, many of whom, though not all, would be likely to be Eurosceptic. That would completely

[Mr Francois]

upset the calculations that they have made to reconfigure the new Parliament in order to keep out what they call the “populists” from eastern Europe and, for instance, the Lega Nord from Italy. That is why they would not accept the extension to 30 June. They insisted either on 22 May or 12 April, which is the drop-dead date for when we would have to begin European election preparation in the UK.

So my argument simply is this: I believe that for the EU protecting the integrity of the Parliament, which under the co-decision procedure under the Lisbon treaty has much greater power now relative to the other institutions, would be even more important to those who really believe in the project than trying to keep the UK in the EU, although many would like that. Therefore, if I am right, they would not countenance any further extension beyond the dates that have been given, because it would muck up the European Parliament and that would spoil Macron’s plans to federalise the EU. So my argument is that we should not be worried about a long extension, because I believe, although I cannot prove it in the House tonight, that they will never grant it. They do not want, in any circumstances, to go beyond 12 April because it means European elections that they simply cannot stomach, because there would be 35 to 40 Eurosceptic British MEPs who completely rip up their plan for the Parliament.

Mr Sam Gyimah (East Surrey) (Con) *rose*—

Mr Francois: I am going to finish.

I believe, on that basis, that the threat of a long extension has always been a false one and that if we get to 12 April, we can leave, because I believe that those who believe in the project would not allow the extension.

Finally, the Government spent £9 million on sending a document to every household in this country, before the referendum, that said, “This is a once-in-a-generation decision. This is your decision and we will implement what you decide.” If the people in this House overturn that decision, the people will be extremely angry. Do not say you were not warned.

Mr Vaizey *rose*—

Steve Double *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Is the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mr Francois) giving way, or has he completed his speech?

Mr Francois: I have finished to leave time for my right hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Mr Vaizey).

Mr Speaker: It is very good of the right hon. Gentleman to advise me, but I was going to call Mr Double, and then Mr Vaizey.

Mr Vaizey *indicated dissent.*

Mr Speaker: You can divide it between you.

8.55 pm

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): Many good speeches have been made this evening about the validity of the instrument we are being asked to vote on, but I wish to talk briefly about what I believe what is

taking place tonight looks like to the British people, particularly the 17.4 million people who voted to leave the EU. Many of the British people have put their trust in this place and we told them that we would be leaving the EU on 29 March, in just two days. The passage of this statutory instrument to delay that date is a breach of trust with the British people, who trusted us and took us at our word when we said we would be leaving at the end of this month. Many people are concerned that Brexit is being stolen by the establishment in this place, and the passage of this instrument is another step towards that taking place.

Many people will feel that this change is wrong for the very reason that has been mentioned many times: we have been told that we do not have a choice tonight, that the EU has already made this decision for us and that the date on which we leave is going to be delayed. We have been told that what we do tonight is irrelevant because the decision has already been made, so we should just pass it through. If we want an example of why many of the 17.4 million people voted to leave, that is it. Is there any pretence that this House has sovereignty over our own rules? We cannot even decide for ourselves the date on which we are going to leave. We have been told it by the EU. We could not even get the date that we wanted, which was negotiated away. I shall therefore keep trust with the word that we gave the British people when we said we would leave on 29 March and will not support this statutory instrument tonight.

Mr Vaizey *rose*—

Mr Bacon *rose*—

Mr Speaker: I call Mr Ed Vaizey.

8.57 pm

Mr Edward Vaizey (Wantage) (Con): Everyone on the Government Back Benches has spoken against this statutory instrument; I just have time to say that I fully support it. I cede my place to my hon. Friend the Member for South Norfolk (Mr Bacon).

8.58 pm

Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk) (Con): This Government have had half the time it took to fight the second world war, two thirds of the time it took to fight the first world war, and the entire length of the Kennedy Administration, during which time the groundwork was laid for a successful moonshot. The idea that we need more time is nonsense. The Government have had plenty of time, they have not used it well enough, and we should just leave.

8.58 pm

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): Further to that excellent speech, I point out that it took seven years to organise the two-week London Olympics. Extracting ourselves from the most sophisticated political and economic alliance in the history of the world will probably take a bit longer.

The House divided: Ayes 441, Noes 105.

Division No. 394]

[8.59 pm]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Afolami, Bim

Aldous, Peter
Ali, Rushanara
Allen, Heidi

Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Argar, Edward
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Atkins, Victoria
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Bailey, Mr Adrian
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Stephen
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barron, rh Sir Kevin
 Bebb, Guto
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Bellingham, Sir Henry
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Benyon, rh Richard
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
 Blomfield, Paul
 Boles, Nick
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brake, rh Tom
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brine, Steve
 Brock, Deidre
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Buckland, Robert
 Burden, Richard
 Burghart, Alex
 Burgon, Richard
 Burt, rh Alistair
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cable, rh Sir Vince
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Cartledge, James
 Chalk, Alex
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Colin
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coaker, Vernon
 Coffey, Ann
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Collins, Damian
 Cooper, Julie
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Costa, Alberto
 Cowan, Ronnie

Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
 Coyle, Neil
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crausby, Sir David
 Crawley, Angela
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cunningham, Alex
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 Davey, rh Sir Edward
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies, Glyn
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 De Piero, Gloria
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dowden, Oliver
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellis, Michael
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Farrelly, Paul
 Farron, Tim
 Fellows, Marion
 Field, rh Mark
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mark
 Gauke, rh Mr David
 George, Ruth
 Gethins, Stephen
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Glen, John

Glendon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Grady, Patrick
 Graham, Luke
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, rh Damian
 Green, Kate
 Greening, rh Justine
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Haigh, Louise
 Hair, Kirstene
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Carolyn
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Healey, rh John
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Hussain, Imran
 James, Margot
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen

Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lamb, rh Norman
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lamont, John
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Lee, Karen
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Lidington, rh Mr David
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Masterton, Paul
 Matheson, Christian
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Merriman, Huw
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Monaghan, Carol

Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Moore, Damien
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, David
 Morris, Grahame
 Morton, Wendy
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Ian
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Nandy, Lisa
 Neill, Robert
 Newlands, Gavin
 Newton, Sarah
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norris, Alex
 O'Brien, Neil
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Opperman, Guy
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Parish, Neil
 Pawsey, Mark
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Penrose, John
 Perkins, Toby
 Perry, rh Claire
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pound, Stephen
 Pow, Rebecca
 Powell, Lucy
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Robinson, Mary
 Rodda, Matt
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Rudd, rh Amber
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Rutley, David
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Selous, Andrew
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Alok
 Sharma, Mr Virendra

Shelbrooke, Alec
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Sherriff, Paula
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spellar, rh John
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Rory
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Streeting, Wes
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stringer, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Throup, Maggie
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tredinnick, David
 Trickett, Jon
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Walker, Thelma
 Warburton, David
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whately, Helen
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Williams, Hywel
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, Phil
 Wishart, Pete
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Woodcock, John

Wright, rh Jeremy
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mike Freer and
Jo Churchill

NOES

Afriyie, Adam
 Amess, Sir David
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bradley, Ben
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, Suella
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Bruce, Fiona
 Burns, Conor
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie
 Cash, Sir William
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, Chris
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Eustice, George
 Fabricant, Michael
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Girvan, Paul
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Gray, James
 Green, Chris
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Hoey, Kate
 Holloway, Adam
 Hughes, Eddie
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkins, Andrea
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Gareth
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Lewer, Andrew

Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Little Pengeley, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Mann, Scott
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Mercer, Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Mills, Nigel
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Paisley, Ian
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Percy, Andrew
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Rowley, Lee
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Shannon, Jim
 Simpson, David
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomson, Ross
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Watling, Giles
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wragg, Mr William

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr Peter Bone and
Mr Philip Hollobone

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 25 March, be approved.

Mr Speaker: I will now suspend the House until the outcome of votes on motions—[HON. MEMBERS: “Oh!”] Let me advise the House that it was very much the hope of our extremely dedicated and professional staff that

they would be able to provide the results of the indicative votes to be announced immediately after the result of this Division, but that has not proved possible. I do not expect the suspension to be very long, but I will suspend the House until the outcome of votes on motions relating to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from and future relationship with the European Union is available. The Division bell will be rung two minutes before the House resumes.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Order.

9.20 pm

Sitting suspended.

EU: Withdrawal and Future Relationship (Votes)

9.40 pm

Mr Speaker: I can now announce the result of today's recorded votes on motions relating to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from and future relationship with the European Union.

In respect of Mr Baron's motion (B)—no deal—the Ayes were 160 and the Noes were 400, so the Noes have it.

In respect of Mr Nicholas Boles's motion (D)—common market 2.0—the Ayes were 188 and the Noes were 283, so the Noes have it.

In respect of George Eustice's motion (H)—EFTA and EEA—the Ayes were 65 and the Noes were 377, so the Noes have it.

In respect of Mr Kenneth Clarke's motion (J)—customs union—the Ayes were 264 and the Noes were 272, so the Noes have it.

In respect of the Leader of the Opposition's motion (K)—Labour's alternative plan—the Ayes were 237 and the Noes were 307, so the Noes have it.

In respect of Joanna Cherry's motion (L)—revocation to avoid no deal—the Ayes were 184 and the Noes were 293, so the Noes have it.

In respect of Dame Margaret Beckett's motion (M)—confirmatory public vote—the Ayes were 268 and the Noes were 295, so the Noes have it.

In respect of Mr Marcus Fysh's motion (O)—contingent preferential arrangements—the Ayes were 139 and the Noes were 422, so the Noes have it—[*Interruption.*]

Order. [*Interruption.*] Order. I am finishing—[*Interruption.*] Order. I am finishing my statement—I do not require any help from the Government Chief Whip. The lists showing how—[*Interruption.*] He will learn, so he should listen. The lists showing how hon. and right hon. Members voted will be published in the usual way on the CommonsVotes app and website and in *Hansard*.

Sir Oliver Letwin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. It is very disappointing—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order.

Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset) (Con): It is, of course, a very great disappointment that the House has not chosen to find a majority for any proposition. However, those of us who put this proposal forward as a way of proceeding predicted that we would not this evening reach a majority, and indeed, for that very reason, put forward a business of the House motion designed to allow the House to reconsider these matters on Monday—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. Perhaps colleagues would do the right hon. Gentleman the courtesy—[*Interruption.*] Yes, I say to the right hon. Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin) that I am not asking him; I am telling him that the right hon. Gentleman will be done the courtesy of being heard. That is the beginning and the end of the matter.

Sir Oliver Letwin: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If on Monday the House can reach a majority view, it would be in the interests of our constituents and the country,

[Sir Oliver Letwin]

but I personally continue to harbour the hope that my right hon. and hon. colleagues will see fit to vote in favour of a Government motion between now and close of play on Friday, which would obviate the necessity for a further set of votes on Monday.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. I call the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Stephen Barclay): Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. The House has today considered a wide variety of options as a way forward, and it demonstrates that there are no easy options; there is no simple way forward. The deal that the Government have negotiated is a compromise, both with the EU and with Members across the House. That is the nature of complex negotiations. The results of the process this House has gone through today strengthen our view that the deal the Government have negotiated is the best option. [Interruption.] Furthermore—[Interruption.]

Mr Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman must be heard.

Stephen Barclay: Furthermore, although this was not a significant feature of today's debate, any deal must include a withdrawal agreement. It is the Government's firm wish to get the withdrawal agreement approved by this House, and I urge all Members to agree, no matter their view on what the future relationship should be, that if they believe in delivering on the referendum result by leaving the EU with a deal, it is necessary to back the withdrawal agreement. If we do not do that, there are no guarantees about where this process will end. It is for that reason that I call on all Members from across the House in the national interest to back the Prime Minister's deal.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is a very serious moment for all of us. We have to reflect that this House of Commons has tried to find a way through the Brexit crisis over the last few months, and we have failed. We need to reflect on the fact, when the Government talk about bringing their deal back, that they got 202 and then 242 votes. That deal should be dead. The people's vote got 268 votes tonight. I know we did not win, but we got more votes for a people's vote than the Government did for their proposition. It is becoming increasingly clear that the House cannot find a way forward. The Government and the Prime Minister have failed to provide leadership. The only thing we should now be doing is going back to the people of the United Kingdom in a general election to end this impasse.

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. I call Sir Patrick McLoughlin.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Can you confirm that, following on from your ruling earlier today, none of these questions can be put again?

Mr Speaker: The particular process set in train as a consequence of the business of the House motion is a discrete process. It is the first time it has been conducted,

it was approved by the House and therefore my understanding—[Interruption.] No, no, I am not debating the issue with the right hon. Gentleman. He has more or less courteously raised the point of order, and I am responding to it. I am not going to conduct a debate with him. My understanding of the situation does not entirely cohere with his, and I have explained that the motion passed by the House expressed support for a two-stage process. I will for the time being leave it there. I am extraordinarily grateful to him.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin rose—

Mr Speaker: No, as I just said, I am not debating it with the right hon. Gentleman.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (Ind) rose—

Mr Speaker: Point of order, Anna Soubry. [Interruption.] Point of order, Anna Soubry. [Interruption.] Point of order, Anna Soubry.

Anna Soubry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. [Interruption.] As someone who has been called by you—[Interruption.]

Mr Speaker: Order. Let me just explain—[Interruption.] Order. Let me just explain one thing in this place. The right hon. Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin) is a very senior Member of the House and a former Chief Whip, but he is not the Speaker of this House. It is not for him to presume the order in which matters are considered, and I trust that he will not suppose that it is for him to do so. Let me say very gently to the right hon. Gentleman that I treat him with respect, but I am not intimidated by him, and I am sure—I am absolutely sure—that he would not seek to intimidate me. I am taking a point of order from the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry), and, frankly, that is the situation. [Interruption.]

Anna Soubry: I have been called. [Interruption.] The country is watching us, Mr Speaker. [Interruption.] Let me gently say to Members that I can shout as loudly as anyone, but let us try to remind ourselves what we have decided to do. [HON. MEMBERS: "Nothing."] Some of us have been involved in the debates and the discussions about the procedure from the outset. It is all very well for people to come in at the end of all this, but let us remind ourselves—[HON. MEMBERS: "Patronising."] Oh, I can patronise as well.

Let us remind ourselves that this was a two-stage process. Today was our attempt to see whether there was anything we could settle on, but also to look at where the biggest votes might be. The Prime Minister's deal secured 242 votes, motion (J), which supported a customs union, secured 264 votes, and beating all of them was the motion for a people's vote, with 268 votes. [HON. MEMBERS: "It was a loss."] Members do not need to shout it out. [Interruption.]

Mr Speaker: Order. Like any other Member, the right hon. Lady has a right to be heard, and she will be heard.

Anna Soubry: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

May I suggest that we now proceed to the agreed procedure that the House adopted? May I suggest that, having settled on the matters on which there were the biggest votes, we now move forward to Monday to see if

we can find a compromise, so that we can look to how we are going to give this country the leadership and the certainty that it needs and deserves?

Finally, Mr Speaker—[*Interruption.*] If hon. Members had not tried to shout me down, I might have finished two minutes ago.

May I suggest that we continue with our agreed procedure? It is becoming increasingly obvious that if we do settle on a deal, that deal needs to go back to the British people, and we need to see whether we can arrange that on Monday.

Mr Speaker: I note what the right hon. Lady has said. As a matter of fact, the business of the House motion having been passed, the process is established, and—I say this for the benefit of colleagues, but also for the benefit of those attending our proceedings who are not Members of the House—the process is that a second day, Monday, has been provided for. I am not investing that point with any spin, one way or the other; it is not for the Chair to do that. I am simply reporting the factual position to the House. That is the reality of the matter. [*Interruption.*] It is no good somebody saying “Rubbish.” That is the reality of the matter, because it is that for which the House of Commons voted.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. After many hours of debate and an extremely complex procedure, the House of Commons has decided sweet Felicity Arkwright. I think the public will look in on these proceedings in utter amazement; they will be completely bemused by what has gone on. This attempt to seize the Order Paper has failed. The second referendum has been defeated. The revocation of article 50 was smashed. And surely the last thing we want to do, Mr Speaker, in the eyes of the public, is on Monday to go through this farce all over again.

Mr Speaker: I say this for the benefit of those who have not heard this interaction before: having known—

Mr Francois: Oh, not this again.

Mr Speaker: Yes, it is important. Having known the—

Mr Francois: I have heard it four times.

Mr Speaker: Yes, the right hon. Gentleman has and I have, but others have not. He and I have known each other—[*Interruption.*] Order. I say in a very good-natured spirit to the right hon. Gentleman that he and I have known each other for 35 and a half years, and knowing him as well as I do, I know that he is more interested in what he has to say to me than in anything I have to say to him, but the simple fact of the matter is that a process has been decided upon. It may well be that it does not suit the palate of the right hon. Gentleman; we will have to see what is said tomorrow and by other colleagues, but I repeat that I do not think he really wants much of a response from me. I respect the right hon. Gentleman greatly, as he knows; I have heard what he has said and the House has heard what he said, and I now want to hear what—

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. Wait a moment; patience. I do not mean any unkindness to hon. Members, but I think at this point I will hear from a former Leader of the House of enormous experience, and who had a motion before us today: Dame Margaret Beckett.

Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would be grateful if you could correct or confirm my recollection. I do not know what anybody else expected, but I did not necessarily expect any motion to carry a majority today, certainly not the one I proposed, which, if I recall, has had almost an identical result to the one it had the last time it was moved in this House. My understanding of the procedure instigated by the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) was that we would first let 1,000 flowers bloom and see where we went, that that would expose some things that had perhaps little support, and that then we would seek to proceed to see whether ranking things in an order of importance made a difference.

I have to say to the Secretary of State that I thought it was somewhat extraordinary for him to come to the Dispatch Box and say that this proves that the only thing to do is go ahead with the Prime Minister's motion, which got fewer votes than many motions that have been before us tonight. So perhaps you would tell me, Mr Speaker, whether my recollection, which seems to differ from that of some colleagues, is reasonably accurate.

Mr Speaker: Yes. It is not for the Chair to adjudicate on the merits of the arguments, and I have not sought to do so. What I did seek to do, which I thought it was proper for the Speaker to do, was facilitate the House by selecting a wide range of motions expressing different points of view and allowing those different, and in some cases contrasting, propositions to be tested. I would just very gently make the observation, again with a view to the intelligibility of our proceedings to a wider audience, that these matters have been debated over a lengthy period. Indeed, since the publication of the withdrawal agreement a little over four months ago I have chaired every single debate—and every minute of every single debate and, I think, exchange—in the Chamber on the matter. It is simply a statement of fact to say that in that period of four months and a bit, the House has not reached a conclusion. So if the right hon. Lady is asking me whether I am utterly astonished that today no agreement has been reached, I confess that I am not utterly astonished that after one day's debate no agreement has been reached, but that is the factual position.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin *rose*—

Mr Speaker: I know that the right hon. Gentleman attaches very considerable importance to his next intervention, and I look forward to it with bated breath, beads of sweat upon my brow and eager anticipation, but not before I have heard from the right hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis).

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Is there any way within the rules of order that I can point out to what might be a bemused wider world that Members were not having to choose between these eight different options, that they were able to vote for or against each and every one of them, and that they voted against all of them? If I were

[Dr Julian Lewis]

an unofficial Back-Bench Prime Minister, I would resign at this point, not seek to repeat such an exercise in abject failure.

Mr Speaker: As it happens, I have known the right hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) for precisely the same length of time, virtually to the day, as I have known the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mr Francois), and the mental acuity of the right hon. Member for New Forest East never ceases to strike me. However, in relation to his proposition about being Back-Bench Prime Minister for the day, I gently say that I am not arguing with him and that, in his case, the proposition is an academic one.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Oh, very well; I will indulge the right hon. Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin).

Sir Patrick McLoughlin: Thank you, Mr Speaker. You interpreted my earlier attempt at a point of order as an attempt to argue with you. I was not attempting to argue with you; I was seeking a point of clarification. The most amazing thing about the points of order that we have just heard is that nothing has been said from the Opposition Front Bench, but let us leave that aside for just a second. Can you tell me how your ruling tonight and your response to my earlier point of order coincide with what you said about the Government bringing back a meaningful vote? I think that there was an inconsistency in your ruling, and I would be interested to hear what the views behind it were.

Mr Speaker: I do not wish to disappoint the right hon. Gentleman, but I have made the point once and I thought I had made it clearly—[*Interruption.*] Yes, I made it very clearly. I think he disagrees with it, but the point that I was making is this: the process for which the House opted was and is a discrete process and the first of its kind. Indeed, the novelty of the process, which is welcome to some and not to others, was the subject of much comment earlier in our proceedings. I believe that it is a process, and the House decided earlier that it should be pursued over a two-day period. In those circumstances, with a specific balloting procedure set in train, I do not think that it falls into the category the right hon. Gentleman has described.

I should add that I set out the position in respect of the same question in the same Session on 18 March, and that on 25 March—that is to say, on Monday this week—in response to a question on her statement from the right hon. Member for New Forest East, the Prime Minister signalled that she was well aware of the strictures that I had issued and that if the Government attempted to bring back their deal, they would ensure that my requirements were met. So it was obviously in the Prime Minister's mind that there was a test that needed to be met, and I reiterated earlier this afternoon that test of change. I do not honestly think that it can usefully be argued further tonight, but no doubt there will be discussions in the days to come and we shall have to see what emerges. I hope that that satisfies the right hon. Gentleman, at least in part. He is not easily satisfied,

but I hope that it has at least in part satisfied him for tonight—[*Interruption.*] Ah! The Attorney General says, "It ought to!" Who am I to disagree on this matter with so learned and cerebral an authority in the House as the Attorney General?

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I note from the results of round one of the indicative votes process that the Father of the House's motion on a customs union failed by a majority of eight and the motion to hold a confirmatory ballot failed by 27, and yet the shadow Brexit Secretary argued that the Government's motion, which failed by 230 at its first attempt and by 149 at its second attempt, should somehow take precedence—[*Interruption.*] I meant to say the Brexit Secretary; I was just future gazing. Does that not strike you as a rather odd interpretation of the results so far, Mr Speaker?

Mr Speaker: Well, interpretations vary, which I think is clear from the points of order. The hon. Lady has made her point with some force, and I am sure that people will study it in the *Official Report* together with the observations of other right hon. and hon. Members.

Sir Vince Cable (Twickenham) (LD): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Further to the point about how to reconcile this evening's votes with your ruling earlier today, I note that two motions received votes significantly in excess of what the Government have achieved with their meaningful votes. Would it therefore not be appropriate for the Government to bring back their withdrawal agreement, amended to take account of the Leader of the House's changes and modified to allow for a confirmatory vote? In that way, we may at last reach some consensus.

Mr Speaker: A variety of options is there for policy makers, parliamentarians and members of the Executive, and the right hon. Gentleman has helpfully indicated what he thinks should be the priorities in the important days that lie ahead.

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Last Monday, when you made it clear that no identical vote should be put to the House twice, you were also helpful in clarifying on a point of order from myself that, in deciding whether a vote was identical, you would take into consideration the conditions and circumstances in which Members were having to make a decision. Since the last meaningful vote, there have been many other votes, including a number today, and many of my colleagues have indicated both privately and publicly that the conditions and circumstances therefore mean that they wish to change their mind—not least my hon. Friend the Member for South East Cornwall (Mrs Murray), who is getting married on Saturday and has just told colleagues that she would like to support another vote on the withdrawal agreement. Given that time is pressing and that a decision must be made before Cinderella appears on Friday night, please can we reconsider the conditions and circumstances around a meaningful vote?

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. Some people may have changed their mind, but others have not done so, and the situation is as I have just described. I recognise the premium that

the hon. Lady attaches to the matter, but I do not have anything to add to or subtract from what I have already said, for the simple reason that I think it has the advantage of being true and of continuing validity.

Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Notwithstanding the programme motion that says that we will be discussing these matters again on Monday and your earlier comments about the Prime Minister's deal and the possibility of bringing it back, have you received any intelligence about whether the House will be sitting on Friday and, if it is, what it will be discussing?

Mr Speaker: The answer to that is that at this stage I do not know. As the hon. Lady will understand, that matter is not first and foremost in my hands. It may be that colleagues will discover more tomorrow if they attend business questions. After all—I say this again for the purposes of the intelligibility of our proceedings—that is the weekly occasion on which we learn from the Leader of the House the intended business for the next parliamentary week. I have a strong sense that colleagues will be in their places to listen to what the Leader of the House has to say and, possibly, to put questions to her. Enlightenment will come not necessarily tonight, but in all likelihood tomorrow, on that occasion or later in the day.

Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I always listen with great interest to your rulings on procedure, and I listened with quite some interest to your ruling earlier today. I would be grateful for your view on page 332 of “Erskine May,” which motions

“Standing Order No 27 allowing the Government to arrange its business in any order it thinks fit... This far-reaching control can be further extended by the Government, if the need arises, by inviting the House to agree to a motion suspending the relevant standing orders”

Could you clarify whether my interpretation, which would give an ability to move a motion on a Standing Order so as to secure another vote or to rearrange business, is correct?

Mr Speaker: I am well familiar with “Erskine May.” The House's ownership of its Standing Orders is a matter of established fact, which has been of long-standing significance. As to what happens in the period to come, we shall have to see. I am extraordinarily obliged to the hon. Gentleman, and I do not mean it in any spirit of discourtesy, but he has not told me something that I did not know. I am deeply grateful to him, and I feel sure he is pleased that he has made his point.

Kate Hoey (Vauxhall) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Earlier today we voted on a business motion for the proceedings today and on Monday. An amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central (Gareth Snell) would have allowed us to vote on removing paragraph (2) so that we do not vote on Monday. This special arrangement was originally going to be for one day. I understand that you decided not to select the amendment but, given the problems we now have, would it not be sensible to vote again tomorrow on whether we actually want to continue with this on Monday?

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Lady. That is an innovative thought on her part. She says the position was originally going to be for one day, and I do not mean this in any spirit of unkindness or discourtesy, but the answer is no. The original form of the motion specified two days, not one day, and it specified what its mover wanted, rather than what the hon. Lady might have wanted. There was that alternative proposition, and my view was that the House would be keen to get on with the substantive debate on a vast miscellany of different motions and that the House should be invited to decide the business of the House motion. The House decided the business of the House motion, and the business of the House motion specified two days. I absolutely understand that that does not please her, but that is the factual answer to the perfectly reasonable question she put to me.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Clearly the decisions taken tonight were to defeat all the motions you selected but, of course, there were eight other proposals that you chose not to put to the vote—that is absolutely your right—and on which the House has not had a chance to reach a decision. Many of those proposals were signed by a number of Members on a cross-party basis. Personally, I do not agree with most of them. However, we have not tested the House's view on them. What is your intention on those motions that were not chosen for debate? Can they now be considered on Monday to test the House's opinion?

Mr Speaker: My understanding of the intention of the architect of the process is that it was intended, ideally, to reach a conclusion in one day, but more likely to result in a shortlisting. Therefore on the second day, with a narrower field of relatively popular, if not sufficiently popular, propositions, it would be possible to reach a conclusion between those remaining high contenders.

Off the top of my head, I would not automatically have thought it was the wish of the architects of the procedure, or the most obviously sensible course, to test those propositions that were not selected in the first place. I am happy to consider the point, but I would not have thought so.

I know the hon. Gentleman is not criticising, and he asked his question in an extremely reasonable way, as he always does, but in so far as Members or others might ask, “What motions were not selected and why?” the answer is that I was making a judgment about the breadth of the issues, the numbers and range of support, and where there was duplication, as he will attest there was, I tended not to choose two propositions on the same subject but rather to arbitrate between competing claims. It would not seem to be obviously sensible simply to opt for the other of the two competing claims. I would have thought it is more sensible, if we have that second day as the House has voted to do, to seek to make further progress from those propositions that were tested today. That would be my instinct, but I am always open to representations from colleagues.

Bob Blackman: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. I particularly referred to the so-called “Malthouse compromise”, which has signatures from at least three different parties. You did not select it for debate, so this procedure has not had the chance to test

[Bob Blackman]

the House's opinion on it. Why could it not be brought back as a specific issue, given the range of support there is across political parties for it?

Mr Speaker: I am happy to consider the point. As I say, I thought that I had chosen a range of propositions that reflected the key issues in the debate and the key preferences for outturn. I am speaking off the top of my head, as colleagues can see. I had some regard also to a consideration that has always been adjudged to be important, by Members on both sides of the House and on both sides of the Brexit argument: the likely capacity to deliver an outcome. That was a factor in my mind, especially in view of pressure of time and the need to work with other partners.

Mike Gapes (Ilford South) (Ind): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. This relates back to the earlier point of order made by the right hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis). He said that the “temporary Prime Minister” should resign. Given the two huge defeats for the Prime Minister, have you had any intimation that, following her discussions with her parliamentary colleagues this afternoon, she will be coming before the House in the next few days to announce her resignation?

Mr Speaker: I have certainly received no such indication at all. The Prime Minister was here today. To be fair, she has been a most assiduous attender in the Chamber, in making statements to the House and responding to questions, often for very appreciable periods of time. Obviously, she will be here next week for Prime Minister's questions, and we fully anticipate and look forward to that. I have received no such notification. I am aware of media reports, but I would not have been present at any meetings that took place earlier this afternoon, for obvious reasons. The hon. Gentleman has made his own points in his own way, with his customary style and puckish grin.

Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. You have commented previously that your determinations—your rulings in this place—depend on precedents, context and circumstances. Many of us believe that the context of a meaningful vote 3 has changed in the light of the votes this evening. Could you provide some guidance as to what would constitute context and circumstances changing in your mind, so that we can be assured as to whether or not a meaningful vote 3 is possible?

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Gentleman can readily extrapolate from things that I have said before on this matter. I made a clear statement on 18 March, and I responded to a miscellany of questions on that occasion, possibly including an inquiry from him—I do not recall for certain but there might have been such. On that occasion, I indicated that it seemed to me that there was a matter not just of precise wording but of thrust: what was the essential thrust of the proposition that was being put, and had it changed or had it not. I invoked evidence, in support of the propriety of the second vote on 12 March, of the publication of documents consequent upon discussions that took place with the European Union. Those were examples it seemed to me of facts, of evidence and of circumstances that were relevant.

I note the opinion of the hon. Gentleman that the situation has in some way now changed. He is perfectly entitled to that opinion. One has to look at the specifics. If people come with specifics, the specifics are considered. As a wise and discerning fellow, who is unfailingly fair-minded, I feel sure that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate the wisdom of such an approach.

Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Ind): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is both a national tragedy and a national embarrassment. Is this situation not partly down to the fact that we tried to reduce a complex issue with very many possible versions of Brexit into a simple, binary choice? Does this evening not demonstrate that we must now set out clearly what the choice is and return it to the British people? Will you confirm, Mr Speaker, that the greatest number of votes cast today were for a confirmatory public vote on a defined choice?

Mr Speaker: The factual record speaks for itself. The political point that the hon. Lady perfectly reasonably makes—it is not a party political point, of course—is not one for me, but she has made her point with her typical sincerity and sense of insistence on what she believes to be right, and I respect that. How these proceedings—in all the time I have known the hon. Lady, she has been concerned about this—are viewed by people outwith this place, I do not know. However, it seems to me, if I may say so, that it is a matter not just of the content of what is said but of how it is said that is of the foremost importance. In my experience, the hon. Lady plays the ball rather than the man or woman. If we can, albeit amid inflamed passions and strong conflicts of opinion, maintain that basic respect for each other and that civility of discourse, that has to be in our interests, both in respect of this issue and reputationally for the future.

Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Further to the points of order made by my hon. Friends the Members for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford) and for Mid Worcestershire (Nigel Huddleston), I am not seeking to challenge what you are saying, Sir, but may I ask you what scope exists? We are clearly in uncharted waters and difficult times for both Parliament and the country. Does the scope exist for you to consider overnight, perhaps taking advice from Clerks or others, and reflect on the criteria for the material changes to which you alluded in your statement earlier in the sitting with regard to the Government's being able to bring back a meaningful vote 3? If you could reflect on the criteria that would allow it to happen and realise that, as you have rightly said, this Parliament cannot be hog-tied just by precedent—we are an organic democracy and Parliament—I think that, given the circumstances raised by both of my hon. Friends and others, that could be done, and it might be wise to be done to facilitate still further this ongoing debate, further to Monday.

Mr Speaker: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. Colleagues talk to each other and I talk to senior Members of the House—representatives of the Government, Law Officers and others—from time to time. I do not say it at all unkindly but I do not feel that the hon. Gentleman has put to me anything that has added to what has already been said; he has to some

extent attempted to reinforce the views that have been expressed by other colleagues and with which he may himself sympathise. In so far as he feels he has made his point—and he has made his point—I am greatly obliged to him.

Simon Hoare: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr Speaker: No, no, there is no further to it. The hon. Gentleman has made his point, I have responded to it, and that is that.

Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Given that no single option has so far found a majority in this House, would it not be sensible to suggest to those who can do a bit of math, and in the spirit of compromise, that we put together two options that are not mutually exclusive? For example, we could put together a people's vote with the deal suggested by the Prime Minister, because in that way a combined option might actually make it over the line.

Mr Speaker: I hear what the hon. Lady said, but I do not think it is for me to adjudicate. Colleagues talk to each other, all sorts of propositions are advanced, and they sometimes reflect compromises between people who are of a very different mind and sometimes between people of a similar mind but a different tactic. Anything is possible. It is a good question but, if the hon. Lady will forgive me—I do not mean this critically—it is inevitably an abstract question, in that it does not attend to one particular circumstance, so it is not something on which I can give a verdict. But is it possible for colleagues to communicate with each other about these things in the period ahead, both in the short term and in the medium term? Of course it is possible, and I feel sure that people will do so.

Gareth Snell (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) about the selection of amendments today—I have the sincerest deference to your decisions and do not seek to challenge them—the motion laid by the right hon. Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin) on Monday did not specifically refer to the Order Paper of the following Monday being taken up for more indicative votes. Would it be in order if, on Monday, a third day was sought for indicative votes, given that that was not specified in the original motion? Would it therefore be possible to consider amendments to that motion on Monday, so that we do not end up with further days to repeat this process being claimed every day, with our ending up no further forward in this exercise?

Mr Speaker: It would be perfectly possible for an amendment to any business of the House motion on Monday to be put to me for consideration. In other words, if the hon. Gentleman is asking, for the sake of simplicity, if he could have another go, it would be perfectly open to him to have another go. I am not going to give him any advance promise or indication of likely judgment, but it is perfectly possible for that matter to be considered in the round. He may want to take his chances if that scenario plays out.

Community and Sub-Post Offices

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Jeremy Quin.)

10.26 pm

Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): It now feels like we are actually in a Friday sitting, as we have been here such a long time already. I rise to raise growing concerns that have been brought to my attention by the National Federation of SubPostmasters and by many sub-postmasters in my constituency. I know that colleagues from across the House will have heard similar calls themselves. Several colleagues have already indicated a desire to intervene, which I am keen to accommodate; all I ask is for brevity when they do so.

The simple and undeniable fact is that many post offices face increasing challenges and huge uncertainty with regard to their long-term financial viability. In the modern digital world, with the likes of Amazon, grocery delivery and online banking, many of our small village and town centres, particularly in rural areas, face systemic degradation and challenges unlike anything they have seen before. This is at a time when big banks continue to up sticks and close their local branches at short notice, often with little consultation with their supposedly valued customers and local representatives. The role of the Post Office as the community banker is therefore becoming increasingly pronounced.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I am here to support the hon. Gentleman, because this issue is very important to me and my constituency. Does he agree that, in rural communities, post offices are the hub of country life? They are more than a link to essential services; they further social interaction. It is so important that elderly people in rural communities can have contact with post offices. For many people, the post office is their life.

Gavin Newlands: I agree with the hon. Gentleman. I will go into detail on some of that. After the shenanigans of the last hour, I feel that his intervening in the Adjournment debate has restored balance to the force.

The post office is a community institution in Scotland, and, as we have heard, the rest of the UK. Over the years, famous firms like Woolies, BHS and Blockbuster, in addition to countless small family retailers in our towns and villages, have closed their doors for good, but the post office continues to be a fixture of our local communities.

Under successive Governments, we have faced decades of aggressive privatisation of nationalised industries that many, particularly in older generations, felt immense pride in contributing to. The Post Office looks very different today from 25, 50, or even 100 years ago, yet it requires still further modernisation. However, to paraphrase a former Tory Prime Minister, it remains one of the only pieces of family silver that has not been flogged for a fraction of its market value for the sake of ideological privatisation. Even as its partner, the Royal Mail, has been privatised—cheaply, I might add—Post Office Ltd remains in public hands.

Post office closures disproportionately affect Scotland, with 40 occurring from 2011 until March last year, compared with England's 297. Per head of population,

[Gavin Newlands]

those closures are happening at a rate that is one third faster in Scotland than south of the border. Add to that mix Scotland's geography and size—including 94 inhabited islands—compared with England, and it becomes clear that the continuing viability of the post office is of extreme importance to Scotland, particularly in the light of the number of bank branches being slashed.

Stephen Gethins (North East Fife) (SNP): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Gavin Newlands: My hon. Friend had not indicated his desire to intervene, but I will give way if he is brief.

Stephen Gethins: I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this debate, as his commitment to local businesses in his area is very strong. Bank closures have had such an impact on small towns in rural areas like my own. Will he ask the Minister about the charges, given that post offices are increasingly taking the burden of those bank closures in rural areas?

Gavin Newlands: Absolutely. I will go into more detail on that subject in my speech and I will press the Minister on the issue.

The important role that the post office plays in our lives is felt more sharply in small towns and rural communities, which are disproportionately dependent on designated community post offices and sub-postmasters. In this debate, I will emphasise the challenges that the latter face due to unfair deals with big banks for providing basic banking services. Despite the growth of online and phone banking, there is still—and, for the foreseeable future, will remain—an undeniable need for easily accessible face-to-face banking, which is of particular importance to the elderly and those with additional support needs. As banks flee the high street, post offices are fulfilling this vital role.

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): I commend my hon. Friend for securing this debate and for the way in which he is setting out his case, which is very strong. He mentioned the problem of closures in communities across Scotland. We are very fortunate in my constituency of Airdrie and Shotts, because we have managed to secure a new post office in Plains that has since been very well supported. Does he agree that that support should send a strong message to the Government to open new post offices, not to close them?

Gavin Newlands: I do not need to add to my hon. Friend's contribution; the Minister has heard him.

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): Is it not bizarre that the Department for Work and Pensions has pushed people to open bank accounts away from the post office in order to receive benefits, when they actually end up back at the post office? Maybe we should make post offices more secure to provide access to cash.

Gavin Newlands: I agree 100% with my hon. Friend that the entire exercise is, quite frankly, a piece of nonsense; she makes her point well.

The fees that banks pay to Post Office Ltd, which in turn compensates its sub-postmasters, to carry out this work have been ridiculously low—so much so that the majority of these transactions are actually carried out at a loss to the sub-post office. For example, for every £1,000 of cash accepted over the counter, Post Office Ltd is paid 24p. There is no differential between the commissions paid for coins and for notes, so in effect if the post office had to count 100,000 pennies, it would get to keep 24 of them as payment. To be clear, Post Office Ltd also pays a transaction fee, but the combined fees are insufficient to cover those costs. It is clear that the current deal is deeply unfair and unsustainable.

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on bringing this debate to the House. Of course, there are issues in rural areas in Scotland, but we also have an issue in Brentford town centre—a small town centre in the suburbs of London. We have lost our sub-post office, which closed in the new year because the sub-postmaster did not want to keep it on. No one else could be found among any of the other businesses to run the sub-post office because, as he has just outlined, it is just not viable. Does he agree that the Government need to review their tapering down of the network subsidy payment, which was supposed to be what made sub-post offices viable? In Brentford's case, it is clearly no longer viable.

Gavin Newlands: I totally agree. It is simply not viable to be a sub-postmaster at the moment.

Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP): My hon. Friend made an excellent point about the fact that our post offices are being expected to pick up the slack because the banks have abandoned our high streets. Does he agree that this is putting postmasters in crisis, because the remuneration is so poor that, on average, many earn below the minimum wage?

Gavin Newlands: It is as if my hon. Friend, who is sitting next to me, had read my speech, because I am about to come to that.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): There is a fantastic post office in the village of Dunlop in my constituency where people do great work. It has a fine range of whiskies and beers, by the way, so it is well worth a visit. They have the same issue. The sub-postmaster has worked out that on the hours he does, he gets paid less than the minimum wage, yet he hires staff and correctly pays them the money they are due. Is this not an injustice?

Gavin Newlands: It absolutely is. That sub-postmaster will have even less money once he has paid the commission to my hon. Friend for the advert he has just given.

At this point, it is worth giving some background and context regarding sub-postmasters' remuneration. Previously, all post offices received a fixed element of pay—a core payment—that also allowed for six weeks' annual leave. Now, only a small number of offices—about 400—that did not go through the network transformation, plus offices designated as community offices, continue to receive a fixed element of pay. Overall, the total amount paid to sub-postmasters has dropped as a result of the removal of this fixed element of pay from the

majority of offices. The total amount paid by Post Office Ltd across the whole network in 2017-18 was 17% lower than in 2013-14, and that is before adjusting for inflation. As a result of the transformation programme, new post office models—main, local, and local-plus offices—are paid on commission only for the transactions they carry out. Main-model offices receive commission rates that are roughly one third higher than local-model offices.

It is with this backdrop that the Post Office is currently engaged in renegotiating the deeply unfair banking contracts with UK Finance, the body that represents the banks. Given that the Government have hidden behind the post office network countless times at the Dispatch Box while defending bank branch closures since 2015, and that, on behalf of the public, they own the Post Office, I hope that they will act as the proper stewards of the Post Office they should be and ensure that the deal ends up being a fair and sustainable one.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this debate, because the point he is making is absolutely correct. More and more people are becoming dependent on post offices precisely because of the bank closures. The whole of Maryhill Road in my constituency, which I know he is familiar with, is going to be left without a single bank due to closures of all kinds of branches, and that is just since we were all elected in 2015. It is absolutely vital that the post offices on that street—a very long street—are supported to continue to maintain support for the people who need face-to-face banking services.

Gavin Newlands: I totally agree with my hon. Friend. I know Maryhill Road well as I used to work there for many years. It is in the heart of Craighang, where my wife is from.

Hugh Gaffney (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (Lab): Does the hon. Gentleman know that not just the banks are shutting post offices but the Government? The Post Office is shutting down Crown post offices, and 73 post offices in Scotland have been put into WHSmith—the worst retailer in the country. This is happening because of the Government. The Scottish Government are different—they are opening up post offices.

Gavin Newlands: I totally agree. The post office network, with the Crown issue and this issue, is being dismantled before our eyes unless the Government get to grips with this.

Bill Grant (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (Con) *rose*—

Gavin Newlands: I am conscious of the time, and the Minister may be a little bit shorter of response time than she would perhaps like to be, but I will give way.

Bill Grant: Does the hon. Gentleman share my concern that the income of the small businesses run by many sub-postmasters and postmasters has been driven down by the Post Office and has reduced dramatically, and they are therefore unable to sell on what is maybe a long-established business that nobody will take on? This is leading to the closure of important post offices in communities. The Post Office itself is reducing their number and causing this crisis.

Gavin Newlands: The hon. Gentleman makes an excellent point. I will come on to detail some of that shortly, if I get a minute between interventions.

The recent survey by the National Federation of SubPostmasters makes for stark reading both for Post Office Ltd and the Government. It found that 77% of sub-postmasters believe that their remuneration rates for business banking are unfair, while only 9% thought them fair, and 67% thought the rates for personal banking were unfair. If that is felt in such huge numbers, I am confident that there is a serious problem emerging that must be addressed quickly. If the number of banking transactions were to continue to increase, 76% of sub-postmasters would be concerned that the level of profit from these transactions would be inappropriate, but 50% of them also had concerns about the volume of cash they had to hand, and a further 42% were concerned about the impact on customer queuing time.

I have visited post offices in my constituency, and unfortunately a picture has emerged that matches the one painted by the federation. When I spoke with those at Ferguslie Park post office, they agreed that the fees they received were not adequate, especially for the amount of transactions that they carry out. That post office plays an important role in administering and advising on benefit payments and has had little success in making sales on the likes of life insurance, savings accounts, mortgages and home insurance. It is therefore especially important that the post office has a secure financial future.

The federation is also concerned about post office closure rates. In July 2018, nearly 1,000 post offices in the sub-postmaster network were listed as temporarily closed—8% of the entire network.

Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP): I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this Adjournment debate. In Hardgate in my constituency, the Post Office has been unable to replace the closed post office, which serves Hardgate, Duntocher and Faifley. Does he agree that it is up to the Government to force the Post Office to re-establish Crown post offices, where the Post Office cannot meet that need?

Gavin Newlands: I totally agree. The first thing that has to be done, though, is to increase the rates that make post offices viable in the modern age. I hope the Minister will take that step.

In 2018, sub-postmasters were far more likely to state their intention to close in the coming year than small businesses in general, with 22% intending to close or downsize their operation. Those with such plans overwhelmingly came from deprived areas. Sub-postmasters also face increasingly difficult working conditions, with often 40-plus hours being dedicated just to the post office side of their business and 27% of them working longer hours in 2018 than 2017. They average fewer than 10 days' holiday each year, and one third took no time off whatsoever. They also face less take-home pay, with 61% taking home less in 2018 than 2017, 76% making less than the national minimum wage for hours worked and 19% of them or their partners taking on extra work to supplement their income.

Since network transformation, many post offices designated as local post offices, such as Kirklandneuk in my constituency, have had some services removed,

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such as Parcelforce services and passport services, which may otherwise cross-subsidise the lack of remuneration for banking services. Clearly that would be less of an issue were they simply paid a fair rate from the banks.

Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Gavin Newlands: I will give way if the hon. Gentleman promises to be brief, and I congratulate him on the birth of his child.

Douglas Ross: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that. I have done my bit for the Post Office recently, with the number of cards I have been receiving since the birth of my child—although perhaps 35 cards did not have a stamp put on them, because I have not had any from SNP Members so far, but I have had many congratulations, which I am grateful for.

I have raised this issue a number of times. We are fortunate that the director for Scotland for the National Federation of SubPostmasters, Paul McBain, owns post offices in Moray. An issue that comes up time and again is that the public are not aware of the wide range of services that are available in post offices. They know what was historically available, but much more is now available, and we need to promote that message, to encourage more of our constituents to use post offices rather than online services.

Gavin Newlands: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. That is certainly the case, and the survey bears that out; that is the belief of sub-postmasters. But at the end of the day, more customers going into a post office to use the services will just swamp it and perhaps make it an even bigger loss-making venture than it currently is. We need to sort the rates out as well.

Bridge of Weir post office, which I have raised in this place in the past, has serious concerns about its long-term financial viability. After making a small loss last year, it anticipates that the losses will continue to rise. All told, if this continues, it expects its accumulative losses over 10 years to reach £70,000, despite the centre being run almost entirely by volunteers, with just one paid member of staff in the post office.

When I previously raised the Bridge community centre post office, in asking the Leader of the House for a debate on this issue, I pointed out that despite being the textbook definition of a community institution—run by the community for the community, because no retailer would take up the franchise—it receives no community subsidy from the UK Government, and this is regrettable. Owing to the Government's rules on distance to other retailers and to other post offices, it does not qualify for any support, but with a dose of common sense, this would be entirely avoidable.

Let us remember that no other Bridge of Weir retailer wanted to take this on. In addition, the Bridge's other retail offerings—tea and coffee, cards, second-hand books—do not operate in competition with any other Bridge of Weir retailer. There is another post office within the three-mile limit, which also rules out community status. However, the community designation ignores local public transport links, which Bridge of Weir had gei few to start with, and recent cuts have eviscerated

the village's bus service. In addition, the next closest post office is a 10-minute walk from the nearest bus stop, meaning that access, even with an adequate bus service, is a huge issue.

This all said, I understand the need for community status criteria to be in place, but it is clear to me that we need to look again at these criteria, or to allow for common sense exceptions in places such as Bridge of Weir. The community subsidy is still vital as it supports many branches that might not otherwise be commercially viable. Under current plans, the Government subsidy to the post office is due to be cut in the coming year and to end entirely in 2021, but I would strongly urge the Minister to reconsider this.

The National Federation of SubPostmasters' latest study found that, last July, 17% of community model branches were actually closed. This is alarming as they are potentially the very last store in a local area. The community subsidy is therefore letting many post offices fall through the net at the current rate, let alone with a further reduction or indeed its removal. This is not a promising outlook for the future of the post office network.

In too many of our small and rural towns, the local post office is often the last place where a face-to-face, human service is available. With such a wide array of duties—handling mail, banking, benefit administration and so on—it is understandable why the post office has continued to be such a vital lifeline to so many of our communities. I therefore urge this Government to listen to sub-postmasters to see what more they can do to support them in the short, medium and long term. They should not be afraid to stand behind the Post Office—let us not forget that we own it—and use their influence to ensure that it gets a fair and equitable deal with the banks that now rely on post offices to provide their services.

I urge the Minister to rethink the Government's community designation to take into account local geography and factors such as public transport links in our communities. After speaking to my constituents, and I am sure that others in this place will have found the same, the current community designation leaves many community post offices—in practice, if not designation—out to dry. Indeed, the Minister must ensure that the community subsidy does not end in 2021. If indeed it were to end, I dread to think of the number of towns and villages left without a bank or a post office at all.

Given that the vast majority of the post office network is made up of sub-postmasters, we should be concerned when they tell us that they are overworked and underpaid, and most of all when they tell us that their financial futures are perilous. I hope the Minister will commit to meeting me to discuss this further.

The local post office has a revered position in our public life, standing through centuries of change, turmoil and political drama. It is important to note that times have changed, and the modern digital age has not been to the advantage of the post office. I only hope that we can maintain and protect a sustainable post office network for all our communities. The Government have a pivotal role in securing this vision, and I urge the Minister to listen to and to heed all the points raised by many Members in this short debate to ensure a secure future for our post offices.

10.48 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst): I congratulate the hon. Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire North (Gavin Newlands) on securing today's important debate on community and sub-post offices. I am sorry that I do not have much time, but I will try to respond to some of the issues that have been raised. I am aware of his close interest in this subject, as we exchanged correspondence on this very issue last October. For centuries, post offices have been the centre of social life in our communities, towns and villages across the UK. This is why, in our 2017 manifesto, we committed to safeguarding the post office network and supporting community and sub-post offices, recognising the key role that post offices play in their communities.

At this juncture, it is worth setting out the overall context within which the Post Office operates. Although the Post Office is publicly owned, it is a commercial business operating in competitive markets. The Government set the strategic direction for the Post Office—to maintain a national network accessible to all and to do so more sustainably for the taxpayer—and allow the company the commercial freedom to deliver that strategy as an independent business.

Between 2010 and 2018, we provided nearly £2 billion to maintain and invest in a national network of at least 11,500 post offices. That extensive network gives the Post Office a unique reach among service providers. The Post Office currently meets and exceeds all Government accessibility targets at a national level.

The Post Office's financial performance has improved significantly. Consequently, Government funding required to sustain the network has drastically decreased and is set to decrease even further in future years.

Dr Whitford: Will the Minister give way?

Kelly Tolhurst: I will not give way—I have only six minutes left.

Government investment has also enabled the modernisation of over 7,500 branches, added more than 200,000 opening hours a week and established the Post Office as the largest network trading on Sunday.

I encourage hon. Members to look objectively at those facts. They clearly show that the network is at its most stable in decades. Maintaining a stable network of community-status branches is at the heart of the Post Office's social purpose. They are effectively the last shop in the village.

Almost half the 6,000 rural post offices have community status, including some of the post offices in the constituency of the hon. Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire North. In those areas, post offices are regarded as part of the fabric of community life. For example, a report by Citizens Advice on the use of the rural post office network found that seven out of 10 consumers bought essential items at a post office and almost 3 million shoppers visited a post office on a weekly basis.

The Post Office recognises the unique challenge of running a community branch and supports the postmasters who run them differently from the rest of the network. Those postmasters receive fixed remuneration, as well as variable remuneration, to reflect their special circumstances.

In addition, the Post Office delivered almost £10 million of investment via the community fund between 2014 and 2018. That enabled community branches to invest in their associated retail businesses. The Post Office has now launched a smaller community branch development scheme that will benefit an anticipated 700 branches. Let me be clear: the Government and the Post Office will continue to support rural post offices.

The hon. Gentleman will be interested to hear that, as part of the post office network transformation programme, 10 of the 14 branches in his constituency have been modernised. Modernisation makes post office branches simpler to run for retailers and improves services for customers through new modern environments and longer opening hours. Modernisation has led to 200 additional opening hours a week in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. Five branches are also open on Sundays, delivering greater convenience to consumers.

Looking more widely at the post office network in Scotland, there are around 1,400 post offices, 66% of which are delivering these important services to communities in rural locations. Scottish branches account for around 11% of branches that have been modernised, creating an additional 24,000 opening hours a week as a result of the network transformation programme. There are around 470 post office services in Scotland that have community status, and around £800,000 has been provided to those branches from the Post Office community fund.

When a branch closes unexpectedly, the Post Office works hard to maintain or restore rural services in Scotland. For example, post office services have been restored at Eyemouth, a rural branch in the Scottish borders, which reopened in February after temporary closing last October and is now providing 122 hours of service per week. Muir of Ord post office, which has been closed since December 2016, is set to reopen next month, and that branch will offer double the service hours previously provided.

Hon. Members have raised concerns about the rates of remuneration paid to postmasters, especially for banking services. Although the contractual relationship between Post Office Ltd and postmasters is an operational matter, I care deeply about the issue and I am determined to make sure that running a post office remains an attractive business proposition.

The Post Office has invested significantly in its branch network to enable its branches to operate more effectively in the retail environment. However, the Post Office recognises that there are some locations where that approach is not viable. In those locations, fixed remuneration remains. The Post Office is not complacent and periodically reviews the rate of return on all services for postmasters to reflect the time and effort involved. Post Office Ltd will also use, where possible, the renewals of commercial contracts as opportunities to negotiate improved rates that can be shared with postmasters.

I want to touch on the issue of Crown franchising, in particular the assumption that franchising means closing and downgrading services. Those criticisms are misplaced. Post office branches are not closing; they are being franchised to other sites. In fact, 98% of post offices across the UK are successfully operated by independent businesses and retail partners.

I assure the hon. Gentleman that all post offices across the network are of the utmost importance to

[Kelly Tolhurst]

this Government and to me as the Minister. We recognise their value and importance to the community, residents, businesses and tourists in both rural and urban parts of the UK. We will continue to honour our manifesto commitment so that the post office can thrive and remain at the heart of our rural and urban communities.

I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising the issue. [Interruption.] I cannot hear him, sadly, because I have a cold, but I am always happy to talk about post offices at any time and happily welcome further debates.

10.56 pm

House adjourned without Question put (Standing Order No. 9(7)).

EU: Withdrawal and Future Relationship Votes

MOTION (B)—NO DEAL

That this House agrees that the UK shall leave the EU on 12 April 2019 without a deal.—(*Mr Baron.*)

The House divided: Ayes 160, Noes 400.

Division No. 386]

AYES

Afriyie, Adam
Amess, Sir David
Andrew, Stuart
Bacon, Mr Richard
Baker, Mr Steve
Baron, Mr John
Bellingham, Sir Henry
Berry, Jake
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bone, Mr Peter
Bradley, Ben
Braverman, Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Bruce, Fiona
Burns, Conor
Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Cash, Sir William
Caulfield, Maria
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Clarke, Mr Simon
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Courts, Robert
Crouch, Tracey
Davies, Chris
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Glyn
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Dinenage, Caroline
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, James
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Ellis, Michael
Elphicke, Charlie
Eustice, George
Evans, Mr Nigel
Fabricant, Michael
Foster, Kevin
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Goldsmith, Zac
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gray, James
Green, Chris
Griffiths, Andrew
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Hoey, Kate
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Hughes, Eddie
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkyins, Andrea
Jenrick, Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lancaster, rh Mark
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mann, Scott
Maynard, Paul
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, Dr Andrew
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Parish, Neil
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic

Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Rosindell, Andrew
Rowley, Lee
Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Shapps, rh Grant
Skinner, Mr Dennis
Smith, Henry
Smith, Royston
Spencer, Mark
Stephenson, Andrew
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stuart, Graham
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Afolami, Bim
Aldous, Peter
Ali, Rushanara
Allen, Heidi
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Atkins, Victoria
Austin, Ian
Bailey, Mr Adrian
Bardell, Hannah
Barron, rh Sir Kevin
Bebb, Guto
Beckett, rh Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
Benyon, rh Richard
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote*
cast by Chris Leslie)
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
Blomfield, Paul
Boles, Nick
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Brabin, Tracy
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brady, Sir Graham
Brake, rh Tom
Brennan, Kevin
Brine, Steve
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Buckland, Robert
Burden, Richard
Burgon, Richard
Burt, rh Alistair
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, rh Liam
Cable, rh Sir Vince
Cadbury, Ruth
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Cartlidge, James
Chalk, Alex
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Chapman, Jenny
Charalambous, Bambos
Cherry, Joanna
Churchill, Jo
Clark, Colin
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Clwyd, rh Ann
Coaker, Vernon
Coffey, Ann
Collins, Damian
Cooper, Julie
Cooper, Rosie
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Costa, Alberto
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crausby, Sir David
Crawley, Angela
Creagh, Mary
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Cunningham, Mr Jim
Daby, Janet
Dakin, Nic
Davey, rh Sir Edward
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
De Piero, Gloria
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dent Coad, Emma
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan

Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dowden, Oliver
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Farrelly, Paul
 Farron, Tim
 Fellows, Marion
 Field, rh Frank
 Field, rh Mark
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Ford, Vicky
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freer, Mike
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gapes, Mike
 Gardiner, Barry
 George, Ruth
 Gethins, Stephen
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Glen, John
 Glendon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Grady, Patrick
 Graham, Luke
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, rh Damian
 Green, Kate
 Greening, rh Justine
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Haigh, Louise
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Howell, John
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Hussain, Imran
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Keegan, Gillian
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lamb, rh Norman
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lee, Karen
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.

Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Masterton, Paul
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Milton, rh Anne
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Moore, Damien
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, David
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Nandy, Lisa
 Neill, Robert
 Newlands, Gavin
 Newton, Sarah
 Norman, Jesse
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Opperman, Guy
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Pawsey, Mark
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Pow, Rebecca
 Powell, Lucy
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Robinson, Mary
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Alok
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Sherriff, Paula
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast
by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Slaught, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spellar, rh John
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stewart, Rory
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Streeter, Wes
 Stride, rh Mel
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Tredinnick, David
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Umunna, Chuka
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Mr Charles

Walker, Mr Robin	Williams, Hywel
Walker, Thelma	Williams, Dr Paul
Watson, Tom	Wilson, Phil
West, Catherine	Wishart, Pete
Western, Matt	Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Whitehead, Dr Alan	Woodcock, John
Whitfield, Martin	Yasin, Mohammad
Whitford, Dr Philippa	Zeichner, Daniel

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (D)—COMMON MARKET 2.0

That this House—(1) directs Her Majesty's Government to—renegotiate the framework for the future relationship laid before the House on Monday 11 March 2019 with the title 'Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom' to provide that, on the conclusion of the Implementation Period and no later than 31 December 2020, the United Kingdom shall—(a) accede to the European Free Trade Association (Efta) having negotiated a derogation from Article 56(3) of the Efta Agreement to allow UK participation in a comprehensive customs arrangement with the European Union,(b) enter the Efta Pillar of the European Economic Area and thereby render operational the United Kingdom's continuing status as a party to the European Economic Area Agreement and continuing participation in the Single Market,(c) enter a comprehensive customs arrangement including a common external tariff at least until alternative arrangements that maintain frictionless trade with the European Union and no hard border on the island of Ireland have been agreed with the European Union,(d) conclude an agreement with the European Union, which in accordance with Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland of the Withdrawal Agreement supersedes the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in full;(e) develop and bring to this House proposals for full and fair enforcement of the rule that EEA migrants must be "genuinely seeking work" and have "sufficient resources not to become a burden on the UK's social assistance system", in accordance with the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006;(2) resolves to make support for the forthcoming European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill conditional upon the inclusion of provisions for a Political Declaration revised in accordance with the provisions of this motion to be the legally binding negotiating mandate for Her Majesty's Government in the forthcoming negotiation of the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union.—(*Nick Boles.*)

The House divided: Ayes 188, Noes 283.

Division No. 387]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane	Boles, Nick
Afolami, Bim	Brabin, Tracy
Ali, Rushanara	Brennan, Kevin
Amesbury, Mike	Brine, Steve
Ashworth, Jonathan	Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Austin, Ian	Bryant, Chris
Bailey, Mr Adrian	Burden, Richard
Benn, rh Hilary	Burgon, Richard
Benyon, rh Richard	Burt, rh Alistair
Betts, Mr Clive	Byrne, rh Liam
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	Carden, Dan
Blomfield, Paul	Cartlidge, James

Chapman, Jenny	Lake, Ben
Charalambous, Bambos	Lamb, rh Norman
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Lavery, Ian
Coaker, Vernon	Lefroy, Jeremy
Collins, Damian	Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Cooper, Julie	Lewis, Mr Ivan
Cooper, rh Yvette	Lloyd, Stephen
Corbyn, rh Jeremy	Lloyd, Tony
Costa, Alberto	Long Bailey, Rebecca
Crabb, rh Stephen	Lucas, Ian C.
Crausby, Sir David	Lynch, Holly
Cruddas, Jon	Madders, Justin
Cryer, John	Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Cunningham, Alex	Mahmood, Shabana
Cunningham, Mr Jim	Malhotra, Seema
David, Wayne	Marsden, Gordon
De Piero, Gloria	Martin, Sandy
Debbonaire, Thangam	Masterton, Paul
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh	McCabe, Steve
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	McDonald, Andy
Dodds, Anneliese	McDonnell, rh John
Dowd, Peter	McGinn, Conor
Drew, Dr David	McInnes, Liz
Dromey, Jack	McMahon, Jim
Edwards, Jonathan	Mearns, Ian
Efford, Clive	Miliband, rh Edward
Esterson, Bill	Morgan, rh Nicky
Eustice, George	Murray, Ian
Evans, Chris	Nandy, Lisa
Farrelly, Paul	Neill, Robert
Fletcher, Colleen	Norris, Alex
Ford, Vicky	Onasanya, Fiona
Foxcroft, Vicky	Onn, Melanie
Freeman, George	Onwurah, Chi
Frith, James	Owen, Albert
Furniss, Gill	Pawsey, Mark
Gaffney, Hugh	Peacock, Stephanie
Glindon, Mary	Pennycook, Matthew
Godsiff, Mr Roger	Penrose, John
Goodman, Helen	Percy, Andrew
Griffith, Nia	Perkins, Toby
Grogan, John	Phillips, Jess
Gwynne, Andrew	Pidcock, Laura
Haigh, Louise	Platt, Jo
Halfon, rh Robert	Pollard, Luke
Hammond, Stephen	Pound, Stephen
Hanson, rh David	Pow, Rebecca
Hardy, Emma	Powell, Lucy
Harman, rh Ms Harriet	Qureshi, Yasmin
Harrington, Richard	Rashid, Faisal
Harris, Carolyn	Rayner, Angela
Hart, Simon	Reed, Mr Steve
Hayman, Sue	Rees, Christina
Hendrick, Sir Mark	Reeves, Rachel
Herbert, rh Nick	Reynolds, Emma
Hoare, Simon	Reynolds, Jonathan
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon	Rimmer, Ms Marie
Hollern, Kate	Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Hollinrake, Kevin	Rodda, Matt
Howarth, rh Mr George	Rowley, Danielle
Hussain, Imran	Ruane, Chris
James, Margot	Sandbach, Antoinette
Jarvis, Dan	Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Johnson, Diana	Shah, Naz
Jones, Gerald	Sharma, Mr Virendra
Jones, Helen	Sherriff, Paula
Jones, Sarah	Smith, Cat
Kane, Mike	Smith, Eleanor
Khan, Afzal	Smith, Jeff
Kinnock, Stephen	Smyth, Karin
Kyle, Peter	Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
Laird, Lesley	Sobel, Alex

Spelman, rh Dame Caroline	Twist, Liz
Starmer, rh Keir	Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
Stevenson, John	Vaz, rh Keith
Sweeney, Mr Paul	Vaz, Valerie
Thomas, Gareth	Watson, Tom
Thornberry, rh Emily	Western, Matt
Timms, rh Stephen	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Tredinnick, David	Williams, Hywel
Trickett, Jon	Wilson, Phil
Turner, Karl	Yasin, Mohammad
Twigg, Stephen	

NOES

Adams, Nigel	Davies, Glyn
Afriyie, Adam	Davies, Mims
Aldous, Peter	Davies, Philip
Allen, Heidi	Davis, rh Mr David
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Dent Coad, Emma
Amess, Sir David	Dinenage, Caroline
Andrew, Stuart	Donelan, Michelle
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Argar, Edward	Double, Steve
Atkins, Victoria	Dowden, Oliver
Bacon, Mr Richard	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi	Drax, Richard
Baker, Mr Steve	Duddridge, James
Baldwin, Harriett	Duguid, David
Baron, Mr John	Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Bebb, Guto	Ellis, Michael
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Ellman, Dame Louise
Beresford, Sir Paul	Elphicke, Charlie
Berger, Luciana (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Chris Leslie</i>)	Evans, Mr Nigel
Berry, Jake	Evennett, rh Sir David
Blackman, Bob	Fabricant, Michael
Blunt, Crispin	Field, rh Frank
Bone, Mr Peter	Field, rh Mark
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Bowie, Andrew	Flint, rh Caroline
Bradley, Ben	Foster, Kevin
Brady, Sir Graham	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Braverman, Suella	Frazer, Lucy
Brereton, Jack	Freer, Mike
Bridgen, Andrew	Fysh, Mr Marcus
Bruce, Fiona	Gale, rh Sir Roger
Buckland, Robert	Gapes, Mike
Burghart, Alex	Garnier, Mark
Burns, Conor	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Cadbury, Ruth	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Campbell, Mr Ronnie	Glen, John
Cash, Sir William	Goldsmith, Zac
Caulfield, Maria	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Chalk, Alex	Graham, Luke
Champion, Sarah	Grant, Bill
Chishti, Rehman	Grant, Mrs Helen
Chope, Sir Christopher	Gray, James
Churchill, Jo	Green, Chris
Clark, Colin	Green, rh Damian
Clarke, Mr Simon	Griffiths, Andrew
Cleverly, James	Hair, Kirstene
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Hall, Luke
Ciwyd, rh Ann	Hands, rh Greg
Coffey, Ann	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Coffey, Dr Thérèse	Harris, Rebecca
Cooper, Rosie	Harrison, Trudy
Courts, Robert	Hayes, rh Sir John
Coyle, Neil	Heapey, James
Crouch, Tracey	Heaton-Harris, Chris
Davies, Chris	Heaton-Jones, Peter
Davies, David T. C.	Henderson, Gordon
	Hepburn, Mr Stephen

Hermon, Lady
Hobhouse, Wera
Hoey, Kate
Hollingbery, George
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Howell, John
Hughes, Eddie
Jack, Mr Alister
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkyns, Andrea
Jenrick, Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Kennedy, Seema
Kerr, Stephen
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Lee, Karen
Lee, Dr Phillip
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Leslie, Mr Chris
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, Clive
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Lucas, Caroline
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mann, John
Mann, Scott
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Maynard, Paul
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
McMorrin, Anna
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Moon, Mrs Madeleine
Moore, Damien
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David

Morris, Grahame
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, Dr Andrew
Norman, Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Osamor, Kate
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Prisk, Mr Mark
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, Jeremy
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Ryan, rh Joan
Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, Alok
Shuker, Mr Gavin
Siddiq, Tulip (<i>Proxy vote cast</i> <i>by Vicky Foxcroft</i>)
Simpson, rh Mr Keith
Skidmore, Chris
Skinner, Mr Dennis
Smeeth, Ruth
Smith, Angela
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Henry
Smith, Laura
Smith, Owen
Smith, Royston
Snell, Gareth
Soubry, rh Anna
Spellar, rh John
Spencer, Mark
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevens, Jo
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stringer, Graham
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael

Tracey, Craig	Watling, Giles
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie	Whately, Helen
Twigg, Derek	Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Umunna, Chuka	Whittaker, Craig
Vara, Mr Shailesh	Whittingdale, Mr John
Vickers, Martin	Wiggin, Bill
Villiers, Mr Theresa	Williams, Dr Paul
Walker, Mr Charles	Williamson, Chris
Walker, Mr Robin	Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Walker, Thelma	Wood, Mike
Wallace, Mr Ben	Wragg, Mr William
Warburton, David	Zeichner, Daniel
Warman, Matt	

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (H)—EFTA AND EEA

That this House recognises the democratic duty of Parliament to respect the result of the 2016 referendum whilst securing an orderly departure from the EU that preserves the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; notes that the UK is a signatory to the treaty establishing the European Economic Area and has not given notice to leave the EEA as is required under Article 127 of that agreement; further notes that the UK was a founding member of the European Free Trade Association in 1960 and therefore call on the Government to (a) assert its existing rights as a signatory to the EEA, (b) take necessary steps to make our rights and obligations as an EEA member operable on an emergency basis through the domestic courts, (c) apply to re-join EFTA at the earliest opportunity to make the EEA agreement operable on a sustainable basis and (d) decline to enter a customs union with the EU but seek agreement on new protocols relating to the Northern Ireland border and agri-food trade.—(*George Eustice.*)

The House divided: Ayes 65, Noes 377.

Division No. 388]

AYES

Afolami, Bim	Hoare, Simon
Aldous, Peter	Hollinrake, Kevin
Bebb, Guto	Kerr, Stephen
Blackman, Bob	Kinnock, Stephen
Boles, Nick	Knight, Julian
Brine, Steve	Lefroy, Jeremy
Burt, Mr Alistair	Letwin, Mr Sir Oliver
Campbell, Mr Ronnie	Lloyd, Stephen
Cartledge, James	Mann, Scott
Caulfield, Maria	Masterton, Paul
Collins, Damian	Morgan, Mr Nicky
Costa, Alberto	Neill, Robert
Courts, Robert	Newton, Sarah
Crabb, Mr Stephen	Parish, Neil
Davies, Chris	Pawsey, Mark
Davies, Glyn	Penrose, John
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Percy, Andrew
Duguid, David	Poulter, Dr Dan
Eustice, George	Pow, Rebecca
Fallon, Mr Sir Michael	Prisk, Mr Mark
Foster, Kevin	Sandbach, Antoinette
Freeman, George	Skinner, Mr Dennis
Garnier, Mark	Spelman, Mr Dame Caroline
Graham, Luke	Stevenson, John
Grant, Bill	Streeter, Sir Gary
Green, Mr Damian	Sturdy, Julian
Halfon, Mr Robert	Thomas, Derek
Hammond, Stephen	Tredinnick, David
Harrison, Trudy	Vaizey, Mr Mr Edward
Hart, Simon	Wallace, Mr Mr Ben
Henderson, Gordon	Warburton, David
Hendrick, Sir Mark	
Herbert, Mr Nick	

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie	Crausby, Mr Sir David
Adams, Nigel	Crawley, Angela
Afriyie, Adam	Creagh, Mary
Ali, Rushanara	Creasy, Stella
Allen, Heidi	Crouch, Tracey
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Cunningham, Alex
Amess, Sir David	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Andrew, Stuart	Daby, Janet
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Davies, David T. C.
Argar, Edward	Davies, Geraint
Atkins, Victoria	Davies, Mims
Bacon, Mr Richard	Davies, Philip
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi	Davis, Mr Mr David
Baker, Mr Steve	Day, Martyn
Bardell, Hannah	De Cordova, Marsha
Baron, Mr John	Dent Coad, Emma
Barron, Mr Sir Kevin	Dinenage, Caroline
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Benyon, Mr Richard	Donelan, Michelle
Beresford, Sir Paul	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Berger, Luciana (<i>Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie</i>)	Double, Steve
Berry, Jake	Doughty, Stephen
Betts, Mr Clive	Dowden, Oliver
Black, Mhairi	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Blackford, Mr Ian	Drax, Richard
Blackman, Kirsty	Dromey, Jack
Blomfield, Paul	Duddridge, James
Blunt, Crispin	Duffield, Rosie
Bone, Mr Peter	Duncan Smith, Mr Mr Iain
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Dunne, Mr Mr Philip
Bowie, Andrew	Eagle, Maria
Bradley, Ben	Efford, Clive
Bradshaw, Mr Mr Ben	Ellis, Michael
Brady, Sir Graham	Ellman, Dame Louise
Braverman, Suella	Elmore, Chris
Brereton, Jack	Elphicke, Charlie
Bridgen, Andrew	Esterson, Bill
Brock, Deidre	Evans, Mr Nigel
Brown, Alan	Evennett, Mr Sir David
Brown, Lyn	Fabricant, Michael
Bruce, Fiona	Farrelly, Paul
Bryant, Chris	Fellows, Marion
Buck, Ms Karen	Field, Mr Frank
Buckland, Robert	Field, Mr Mark
Burden, Richard	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Burghart, Alex	Flint, Mr Caroline
Burns, Conor	Francois, Mr Mr Mark
Butler, Dawn	Frazer, Lucy
Cable, Mr Sir Vince	Freer, Mike
Cadbury, Ruth	Fysh, Mr Marcus
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Gale, Mr Sir Roger
Cash, Sir William	Gapes, Mike
Chalk, Alex	George, Ruth
Champion, Sarah	Gethins, Stephen
Chapman, Douglas	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Cherry, Joanna	Gibson, Patricia
Chishti, Rehman	Gillan, Mr Dame Cheryl
Chope, Sir Christopher	Glen, John
Churchill, Jo	Godsiff, Mr Roger
Clarke, Mr Mr Kenneth	Goldsmith, Zac
Clarke, Mr Simon	Goodman, Helen
Cleverly, James	Goodwill, Mr Mr Robert
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Grady, Patrick
Clwyd, Mr Ann	Grant, Mrs Helen
Coaker, Vernon	Grant, Peter
Coffey, Ann	Gray, James
Coffey, Dr Thérèse	Gray, Neil
Cooper, Rosie	Green, Chris
Cowan, Ronnie	Green, Kate
Coyle, Neil	Greenwood, Lilian
	Grieve, Mr Mr Dominic

Griffiths, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hair, Kirstene
Hall, Luke
Hamilton, Fabian
Hands, rh Greg
Hanson, rh David
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Hayes, Helen
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heappey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Heaton-Jones, Peter
Hendry, Drew
Hepburn, Mr Stephen
Hermon, Lady
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollingbery, George
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Mr George
Howell, John
Hughes, Eddie
Huq, Dr Rupa
Jack, Mr Alister
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkyns, Andrea
Jenrick, Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Diana
Johnson, Gareth
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Andrew
Jones, Darren
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Graham P.
Jones, Helen
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Mr Marcus
Jones, Susan Elan
Kawczynski, Daniel
Kendall, Liz
Kennedy, Seema
Killen, Ged
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Kyle, Peter
Lammy, rh Mr David
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Law, Chris
Lee, Dr Phillip
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Leslie, Mr Chris
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, Clive
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack

Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Lucas, Caroline
Lucas, Ian C.
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Shabana
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan
Malhotra, Seema
Malthouse, Kit
Mann, John
Marsden, Gordon
Martin, Sandy
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Maynard, Paul
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
McMorris, Anna
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Monaghan, Carol
Moon, Mrs Madeleine
Moore, Damien
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, Grahame
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Murray, Ian
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Newlands, Gavin
Norman, Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
O'Hara, Brendan
Onasanya, Fiona
Onwurah, Chi
Opperman, Guy
Osamor, Kate
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Pollard, Luke
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, Jeremy
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic

Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel
Reynolds, Emma
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Ruane, Chris
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Ryan, rh Joan
Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, Alok
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy
Shuker, Mr Gavin
Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
Simpson, rh Mr Keith
Skidmore, Chris
Slaughter, Andy
Smeeth, Ruth
Smith, Angela
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Henry
Smith, Jeff
Smith, Laura
Smith, Owen
Smith, Royston
Smyth, Karin
Snell, Gareth
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
Sobel, Alex
Soubry, rh Anna
Spellar, rh John
Spencer, Mark
Stephens, Chris
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevens, Jo
Stewart, Bob

Stewart, Iain
Streeting, Wes
Stride, rh Mel
Stringer, Graham
Stuart, Graham
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Syms, Sir Robert
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Turley, Anna
Twigg, Derek
Umunna, Chuka
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Mr Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Walker, Thelma
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
West, Catherine
Western, Matt
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Williams, Dr Paul
Wishart, Pete
Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Wood, Mike
Woodcock, John
Wragg, Mr William
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (J)—CUSTOMS UNION

That this House instructs the Government to; (1) ensure that any Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration negotiated with the EU must include, as a minimum, a commitment to negotiate a permanent and comprehensive UK-wide customs union with the EU; (2) enshrine this objective in primary legislation.—(*Mr Kenneth Clarke.*)

The House divided: Ayes 264, Noes 272.

Division No. 389]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Austin, Ian
Bailey, Mr Adrian

Barron, rh Sir Kevin
Bebb, Guto
Beckett, rh Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
Benyon, rh Richard
Betts, Mr Clive
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
Blomfield, Paul
Boles, Nick

Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brine, Steve
 Brown, Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burden, Richard
 Burgon, Richard
 Burt, rh Alistair
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Chalk, Alex
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Jenny
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
 Coaker, Vernon
 Cooper, Julie
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Coyle, Neil
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crausby, Sir David
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 De Cordova, Marsha
 De Piero, Gloria
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farrelly, Paul
 Field, rh Mark
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Ford, Vicky
 Foxvargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Freeman, George
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gardiner, Barry
 George, Ruth

Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Green, rh Damian
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hoare, Simon
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 James, Margot
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Diana
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lamb, rh Norman
 Lavery, Ian
 Lee, Karen
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael

Masterton, Paul
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morgan, Stephen
 Murray, Ian
 Nandy, Lisa
 Neill, Robert
 Newton, Sarah
 Norris, Alex
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Pawsey, Mark
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Powell, Lucy
 Prentis, Victoria
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie

Adams, Nigel
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allen, Heidi
 Amess, Sir David
 Andrew, Stuart
 Argar, Edward
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Baron, Mr John
 Bellingham, Sir Henry
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie*)

Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sherriff, Paula
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Williamson, Chris
 Wilson, Phil
 Yasin, Mohammad

NOES

Berry, Jake
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, Suella
 Breton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buckland, Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, Conor
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie

Cartlidge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Cleverly, James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coffey, Ann
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Crouch, Tracey
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Davies, Chris
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Glyn
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Dinéage, Caroline
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey
 M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Dowden, Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Ellis, Michael
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Eustice, George
 Evans, Mr Nigel
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Fabricant, Michael
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Field, rh Frank
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Freer, Mike
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gapes, Mike
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Graham, Luke
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Green, Chris
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Hair, Kirstene
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Hermon, Lady
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hoey, Kate
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Howell, John
 Hughes, Eddie
 Jack, Mr Alister
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr
 Ian
 Little Pengelly, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Lucas, Caroline
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, John
 Mann, Scott
 Maynard, Paul
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McMorris, Anna
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Moore, Damien

Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, Grahame
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Norman, Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Simpson, David
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spencer, Mark
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stringer, Graham
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, Rishi
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomson, Ross
 Throup, Maggie
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Tredinnick, David
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Umunna, Chuka
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (K)—LABOUR'S ALTERNATIVE PLAN

That this House requires Ministers to; (a) negotiate changes to the draft Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration so as to secure; (i) a permanent customs union with the EU; (ii) close alignment with the single market underpinned by shared institutions and obligations; (iii) dynamic alignment on rights and protections; (iv) commitments on participation in EU agencies and funding programmes, including in areas such as the environment, education, and industrial regulation; (v) agreement on the detail of future security arrangements, including access to the European Arrest Warrant and vital shared databases; and (b) introduce primary legislation to give statutory status to the objectives set out in paragraph (a).—(*Jeremy Corbyn.*)

The House divided: Ayes 237, Noes 307.

Division No. 390]**AYES**

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Austin, Ian
 Bailey, Mr Adrian
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burden, Richard
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Jenny
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
 Coaker, Vernon
 Cooper, Julie
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Coyle, Neil
 Crausby, Sir David
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 De Cordova, Marsha
 De Piero, Gloria
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Eelman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farrelly, Paul
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gardiner, Barry
 George, Ruth
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Diana
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham
 P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Lee, Karen
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca

Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Nandy, Lisa
 Norris, Alex
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel

Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sherriff, Paula
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Williamson, Chris
 Wilson, Phil
 Yasin, Mohammad

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allen, Heidi
 Amess, Sir David
 Andrew, Stuart
 Argar, Edward
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Baron, Mr John
 Bebb, Guto
 Bellingham, Sir Henry

Benyon, rh Richard
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie*)
 Berry, Jake
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Boles, Nick
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew

Brine, Steve
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buckland, Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, Conor
 Burt, rh Alistair
 Cable, rh Sir Vince
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie
 Cartlidge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, Colin
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Cleverly, James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coffey, Ann
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, Chris
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Glyn
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey
 M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Dowden, Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Ellis, Michael
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Eustice, George
 Evans, Mr Nigel
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Fabricant, Michael
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Field, rh Frank
 Field, rh Mark
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gapes, Mike
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl

Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Graham, Luke
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Hair, Kirstene
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian

Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Little Pengelly, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Lucas, Caroline
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, Scott
 Masterton, Paul
 Maynard, Paul
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Moore, Damien
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Neill, Robert
 Newton, Sarah
 Norman, Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Purslove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew

Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Simpson, David
 Simpson, rh Mr
 Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Spencer, Mark
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, Rishi
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomson, Ross
 Throup, Maggie
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Tredinnick, David
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Umunna, Chuka
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Wood, Mike
 Woodcock, John
 Wragg, Mr William
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (L)—REVOCATION TO AVOID NO DEAL

If, on the day before the end of the penultimate House of Commons sitting day before exit day, no Act of Parliament has been passed for the purposes of section 13(1)(d) of the Withdrawal Act, Her Majesty's Government must immediately put a motion to the House asking it to approve 'No Deal' and, if the House does not give its approval, Her Majesty's Government must ensure that the notice given to the European Council under Article 50, of the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the European Union, is revoked in accordance with United Kingdom and European Union law.—(*Joanna Cherry.*)

The House divided: Ayes 184, Noes 293.

Division No. 391]

AYES

Ali, Rushanara	Elmore, Chris
Allen, Heidi	Esterson, Bill
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Farrelly, Paul
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Farron, Tim
Bardell, Hannah	Fellows, Marion
Bebb, Guto	Field, rh Mark
Berger, Luciana (<i>Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie</i>)	Foxcroft, Vicky
Betts, Mr Clive	Freer, Mike
Black, Mhairi	Frith, James
Blackford, rh Ian	Gaffney, Hugh
Blackman, Kirsty	Gapes, Mike
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	George, Ruth
Blomfield, Paul	Gethins, Stephen
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Gibson, Patricia
Brake, rh Tom	Gill, Preet Kaur
Brennan, Kevin	Godsiff, Mr Roger
Brock, Deidre	Grady, Patrick
Brown, Alan	Grant, Peter
Brown, Lyn	Gray, Neil
Buck, Ms Karen	Green, Kate
Cable, rh Sir Vince	Greening, rh Justine
Cadbury, Ruth	Greenwood, Lilian
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair	Grogan, John
Chapman, Douglas	Haigh, Louise
Charalambous, Bambos	Hamilton, Fabian
Cherry, Joanna	Hammond, Stephen
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Clwyd, rh Ann	Harrington, Richard
Coffey, Ann	Hayes, Helen
Cowan, Ronnie	Hendrick, Sir Mark
Coyle, Neil	Hendry, Drew
Crausby, Sir David	Hermon, Lady
Crawley, Angela	Hillier, Meg
Creagh, Mary	Hobhouse, Wera
Creasy, Stella	Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Cunningham, Alex	Hosie, Stewart
Daby, Janet	Howarth, rh Mr George
Davey, rh Sir Edward	Huq, Dr Rupa
Davies, Geraint	Jardine, Christine
Day, Martyn	Jones, Darren
De Cordova, Marsha	Jones, Sarah
Debbonaire, Thangam	Jones, Susan Elan
Dent Coad, Emma	Kendall, Liz
Docherty-Hughes, Martin	Killen, Ged
Dodds, Anneliese	Kyle, Peter
Doughty, Stephen	Laird, Lesley
Drew, Dr David	Lake, Ben
Duffield, Rosie	Lammy, rh Mr David
Duncan, rh Sir Alan	Law, Chris
Eagle, Ms Angela	Lee, Dr Phillip
Eagle, Maria	Leslie, Mr Chris
Edwards, Jonathan	Lewis, Clive
Efford, Clive	Linden, David
Ellman, Dame Louise	Lloyd, Stephen
	Lucas, Caroline

MacNeil, Angus Brendan	Sheppard, Tommy
Mahmood, Shabana	Shuker, Mr Gavin
Martin, Sandy	Siddiq, Tulip (<i>Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft</i>)
Maskell, Rachael	Slaughter, Andy
Matheson, Christian	Smith, Angela
McCarthy, Kerry	Smith, Jeff
McDonagh, Siobhain	Smith, Owen
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm	Smyth, Karin
McDonald, Stuart C.	Sobel, Alex
McKinnell, Catherine	Soubry, rh Anna
McMorrin, Anna	Stephens, Chris
Monaghan, Carol	Stevens, Jo
Moon, Mrs Madeleine	Stone, Jamie
Moran, Layla	Streeting, Wes
Morgan, Stephen	Sweeney, Mr Paul
Murray, Ian	Swinson, Jo
Nandy, Lisa	Thewliss, Alison
Newlands, Gavin	Thomas, Gareth
O'Hara, Brendan	Timms, rh Stephen
Onwurah, Chi	Turley, Anna
Osamor, Kate	Twigg, Stephen
Owen, Albert	Umunna, Chuka
Pennycook, Matthew	Vaz, rh Keith
Phillips, Jess	Walker, Thelma
Pollard, Luke	West, Catherine
Rashid, Faisal	Western, Matt
Reed, Mr Steve	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Reeves, Ellie	Whitfield, Martin
Reeves, Rachel	Whitford, Dr Philippa
Rimmer, Ms Marie	Williams, Hywel
Rodda, Matt	Williams, Dr Paul
Rowley, Danielle	Wishart, Pete
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd	Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Ryan, rh Joan	Woodcock, John
Saville Roberts, rh Liz	Yasin, Mohammad
Sharma, Mr Virendra	Zeichner, Daniel
Sheerman, Mr Barry	

NOES

Adams, Nigel	Burns, Conor
Afolami, Bim	Campbell, Mr Gregory
Afriyie, Adam	Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Aldous, Peter	Cartlidge, James
Amess, Sir David	Cash, Sir William
Andrew, Stuart	Caulfield, Maria
Argar, Edward	Champion, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria	Chishty, Rehman
Bacon, Mr Richard	Chope, Sir Christopher
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi	Churchill, Jo
Baker, Mr Steve	Clark, Colin
Baldwin, Harriett	Clarke, Mr Simon
Baron, Mr John	Cleverly, James
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Coffey, Dr Thérèse
Benyon, rh Richard	Collins, Damian
Beresford, Sir Paul	Cooper, Rosie
Berry, Jake	Costa, Alberto
Blackman, Bob	Courts, Robert
Blunt, Crispin	Crabb, rh Stephen
Boles, Nick	Crouch, Tracey
Bone, Mr Peter	Cruddas, Jon
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Bowie, Andrew	Davies, Chris
Bradley, Ben	Davies, David T. C.
Brady, Sir Graham	Davies, Glyn
Braverman, Suella	Davies, Mims
Brereton, Jack	Davies, Philip
Bridgen, Andrew	Davis, rh Mr David
Bruce, Fiona	Dinenage, Caroline
Buckland, Robert	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Burghart, Alex	Dodds, rh Nigel

Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Ellis, Michael
Elphicke, Charlie
Eustice, George
Evans, Mr Nigel
Evennett, rh Sir David
Fabricant, Michael
Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Field, rh Frank
Flint, rh Caroline
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goldsmith, Zac
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Graham, Luke
Graham, Richard
Grant, Bill
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffiths, Andrew
Hair, Kirstene
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heapey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Heaton-Jones, Peter
Henderson, Gordon
Hepburn, Mr Stephen
Herbert, rh Nick
Hoare, Simon
Hoey, Kate
Hollingbery, George
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Howell, John
Huddleston, Nigel
Hughes, Eddie
Hurd, rh Mr Nick
Jack, Mr Alister
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkyns, Andrea
Jenrick, Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Helen
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Kennedy, Seema
Kerr, Stephen
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Little Pengelly, Emma
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Lucas, Ian C.
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mann, John
Mann, Scott
Marsden, Gordon
Maynard, Paul
McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Moore, Damien
Morgan, rh Nicky
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, Grahame
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, Dr Andrew
Neill, Robert
Norman, Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Paisley, Ian
Parish, Neil
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John

Percy, Andrew
Perkins, Toby
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, Victoria
Prisk, Mr Mark
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, Jeremy
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, Alok
Simpson, David
Simpson, rh Mr Keith
Skidmore, Chris
Skinner, Mr Dennis
Smeeth, Ruth
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Henry
Smith, Royston
Snell, Gareth
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
Spellar, rh John
Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
Spencer, Mark
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, John

Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stewart, Rory
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stringer, Graham
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Tredinnick, David
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Tugendhat, Tom
Twigg, Derek
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Mr Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Williamson, Chris
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Zahawi, Nadhim

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (M)—CONFIRMATORY PUBLIC VOTE

That this House will not allow in this Parliament the implementation and ratification of any withdrawal agreement and any framework for the future relationship unless and until they have been approved by the people of the United Kingdom in a confirmatory public vote.—(*Margaret Beckett.*)

The House divided: Ayes 268, Noes 295.

Division No. 392]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allen, Heidi
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Bailey, Mr Adrian
Bardell, Hannah
Bebb, Guto
Beckett, rh Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie*)
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
Blomfield, Paul
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brake, rh Tom
Brennan, Kevin
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen

Burden, Richard
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cable, rh Sir Vince
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chapman, Douglas
 Chapman, Jenny
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coaker, Vernon
 Coffey, Ann
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crausby, Sir David
 Crawley, Angela
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cryer, John
 Cunningham, Alex
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 Davey, rh Sir Edward
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Farrelly, Paul
 Farron, Tim
 Fellows, Marion
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gapes, Mike
 Gardiner, Barry
 George, Ruth
 Gethins, Stephen
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greening, rh Justine
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hermon, Lady
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lamb, rh Norman
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Law, Chris
 Lee, Karen
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor

McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMorin, Anna
 Merriman, Huw
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Murray, Ian
 Newlands, Gavin
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry

Sheppard, Tommy
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Turley, Anna
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Umunna, Chuka
 Vaz, rh Keith
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Williams, Hywel
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, Phil
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Woodcock, John
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Amess, Sir David
 Andrew, Stuart
 Argar, Edward
 Atkins, Victoria
 Austin, Ian
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Baron, Mr John
 Barron, rh Sir Kevin
 Bellingham, Sir Henry
 Benyon, rh Richard
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, Jake
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin

Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buckland, Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, Conor
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Caulfield, Maria
 Champion, Sarah
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo

Clark, Colin
Clarke, Mr Simon
Cleverly, James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, Dr Thérèse
Collins, Damian
Cooper, Rosie
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crouch, Tracey
Cruddas, Jon
Davies, Chris
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Glyn
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Dinenage, Caroline
Dodds, rh Nigel
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan, rh Sir Alan
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Ellis, Michael
Elphicke, Charlie
Eustice, George
Evans, Mr Nigel
Evennett, rh Sir David
Fabricant, Michael
Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Field, rh Frank
Fitzpatrick, Jim
Flint, rh Caroline
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fovargue, Yvonne
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freer, Mike
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goldsmith, Zac
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Graham, Luke
Graham, Richard
Grant, Bill
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffiths, Andrew
Hair, Kirstene
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heapey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Heaton-Jones, Peter
Henderson, Gordon
Hepburn, Mr Stephen
Herbert, rh Nick
Hill, Mike
Hoare, Simon
Hoey, Kate
Hollingbery, George
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Huddleston, Nigel
Hughes, Eddie
Jack, Mr Alister
Jarvis, Dan
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkyins, Andrea
Jenrick, Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Helen
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Kennedy, Seema
Kerr, Stephen
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Little Pengelly, Emma
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Madders, Justin
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mann, John
Mann, Scott
Masterton, Paul
Maynard, Paul
McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Metcalfe, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda

Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Moore, Damien
Morgan, rh Nicky
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, Grahame
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, Dr Andrew
Neill, Robert
Norman, Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Onn, Melanie
Opperman, Guy
Paisley, Ian
Parish, Neil
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Pawsey, Mark
Peacock, Stephanie
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, Victoria
Prisk, Mr Mark
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, Jeremy
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, Alok
Simpson, David
Simpson, rh Mr Keith
Skidmore, Chris
Skinner, Mr Dennis
Smeeth, Ruth
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Henry
Smith, Laura
Smith, Royston
Snell, Gareth
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
Spellar, rh John
Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
Spencer, Mark
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stewart, Rory
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stringer, Graham
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Tredinnick, David
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Tugendhat, Tom
Twigg, Derek
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Mr Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Williamson, Chris
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Zahawi, Nadhim

Question accordingly negated.

MOTION (O)—CONTINGENT PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS

That this House directs that in case the UK is unable to implement a Withdrawal Agreement with the EU, Her Majesty's Government shall seek to agree immediately and preferentially with the EU- (a) a trade agreement and/or joint notification of trade preference covering 100 per cent of goods traded between the UK and EU under which no tariffs or quantitative restrictions will be applied between the parties and full cumulation of rules of origin which shall apply for a period of up to two years after the UK leaves the EU notwithstanding that these arrangements may be superseded or extended by further mutual agreement;

(b) a standstill period of mutual recognition of standards and conformity assessment for up to two years in which the UK will ensure compliance in the UK with the EU legislative acquis as adopted in Retained EU law under the EU Withdrawal Act on the day the UK leaves the EU notwithstanding that these arrangements may be superseded or extended by further mutual agreement; (c) a customs arrangement consisting of advanced trade facilitation measures that enables and makes full and widespread use of simplified and subsidised procedures to perform customs and regulatory declarations and associated control processes away from UK/EU borders; and (d) make provision for the payment of sums to the European Union in amounts equivalent to the UK's current net annual financial contribution to the EU for up to two years in respect of the above agreements and arrangements.—(*Mr Fysh.*)

The House divided: Ayes 139, Noes 422.

Division No. 393]

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Afriyie, Adam	Harris, Rebecca
Amess, Sir David	Hayes, rh Sir John
Andrew, Stuart	Henderson, Gordon
Bacon, Mr Richard	Hoey, Kate
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi	Hollingbery, George
Baker, Mr Steve	Hollobone, Mr Philip
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Holloway, Adam
Blackman, Bob	Hughes, Eddie
Blunt, Crispin	Jack, Mr Alister
Bone, Mr Peter	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Bradley, Ben	Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Braverman, Suella	Jenkyns, Andrea
Brereton, Jack	Johnson, rh Boris
Bridgen, Andrew	Johnson, Dr Caroline
Bruce, Fiona	Johnson, Gareth
Burns, Conor	Jones, rh Mr David
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Knight, Julian
Cash, Sir William	Lancaster, rh Mark
Caulfield, Maria	Latham, Mrs Pauline
Chope, Sir Christopher	Lavery, Ian
Clarke, Mr Simon	Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Lewer, Andrew
Courts, Robert	Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Davies, Chris	Little Pengelly, Emma
Davies, David T. C.	Lopez, Julia
Davies, Glyn	Lord, Mr Jonathan
Davies, Philip	Loughton, Tim
Dinenage, Caroline	Mackinlay, Craig
Dodds, rh Nigel	Maclean, Rachel
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.	Main, Mrs Anne
Donelan, Michelle	Mak, Alan
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Malthouse, Kit
Double, Steve	Mann, Scott
Drax, Richard	Maynard, Paul
Duddridge, James	McPartland, Stephen
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain	McVey, rh Ms Esther
Dunne, rh Mr Philip	Metcalfe, Stephen
Elphicke, Charlie	Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Eustice, George	Mills, Nigel
Evans, Mr Nigel	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Fabricant, Michael	Murray, Mrs Sheryl
Fallon, rh Sir Michael	Offord, Dr Matthew
Field, rh Mark	Paisley, Ian
Francois, rh Mr Mark	Parish, Neil
Fysh, Mr Marcus	Patel, rh Priti
Garnier, Mark	Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Girvan, Paul	Penrose, John
Goldsmith, Zac	Percy, Andrew
Gray, James	Philp, Chris
Green, Chris	Pincher, rh Christopher

Pursglove, Tom
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Rosindell, Andrew
Rowley, Lee
Scully, Paul
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Simpson, David
Smith, Henry
Smith, Royston
Stephenson, Andrew
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stringer, Graham
Stuart, Graham

Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Villiers, rh Theresa
Warburton, David
Watling, Giles
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wragg, Mr William

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane	Cameron, Dr Lisa
Abrahams, Debbie	Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Aldous, Peter	Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Ali, Rushanara	Carden, Dan
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Amesbury, Mike	Cartlidge, James
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Chalk, Alex
Argar, Edward	Champion, Sarah
Ashworth, Jonathan	Chapman, Douglas
Atkins, Victoria	Chapman, Jenny
Austin, Ian	Charalambous, Bambos
Bailey, Mr Adrian	Cherry, Joanna
Bardell, Hannah	Churchill, Jo
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Bebb, Guto	Cleverly, James
Beckett, rh Margaret	Clwyd, rh Ann
Benn, rh Hilary	Coaker, Vernon
Benyon, rh Richard	Coffey, Ann
Beresford, Sir Paul	Collins, Damian
Berger, Luciana (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Chris Leslie</i>)	Cooper, Julie
Berry, Jake	Cooper, Rosie
Betts, Mr Clive	Cooper, rh Yvette
Black, Mhairi	Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Blackford, rh Ian	Costa, Alberto
Blackman, Kirsty	Cowan, Ronnie
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	Coyle, Neil
Blomfield, Paul	Crabb, rh Stephen
Boles, Nick	Crausby, Sir David
Bowie, Andrew	Crawley, Angela
Brabin, Tracy	Creagh, Mary
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Creasy, Stella
Brady, Sir Graham	Cruddas, Jon
Brake, rh Tom	Cryer, John
Brennan, Kevin	Cummins, Judith
Brine, Steve	Cunningham, Alex
Brock, Deidre	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Brown, Alan	Daby, Janet
Brown, Lyn	Dakin, Nic
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	Davey, rh Sir Edward
Bryant, Chris	David, Wayne
Buck, Ms Karen	Davies, Geraint
Buckland, Robert	Davies, Mims
Burden, Richard	Davis, rh Mr David
Burgon, Richard	Day, Martyn
Burt, rh Alistair	De Cordova, Marsha
Butler, Dawn	De Piero, Gloria
Byrne, rh Liam	Debbonaire, Thangam
Cable, rh Sir Vince	Dent Coad, Emma
Cadbury, Ruth	Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan

Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dowden, Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellis, Michael
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Farrelly, Paul
 Farron, Tim
 Fellows, Marion
 Field, rh Frank
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gapes, Mike
 Gardiner, Barry
 George, Ruth
 Gethins, Stephen
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryll
 Glen, John
 Glindon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffith, Nia
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Haigh, Louise
 Hall, Luke
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Carolyn
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Howell, John
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Hussain, Imran
 James, Margot
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Jenrick, Robert
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lamb, rh Norman
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Law, Chris
 Lee, Karen
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca

Lopresti, Jack
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Masterton, Paul
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Milton, rh Anne
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Moore, Damien
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, Grahame
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Murray, Ian
 Neill, Robert
 Newlands, Gavin
 Newton, Sarah
 Norris, Jesse
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onwurah, Chi
 Opperman, Guy
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Pawsey, Mark
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pidcock, Laura
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pound, Stephen
 Pow, Rebecca
 Powell, Lucy
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Redwood, rh John
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Robinson, Mary
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Alok
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Sherriff, Paula
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast
by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spellar, rh John
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Rory
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Streeting, Wes
 Stride, rh Mel
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily

Throup, Maggie	Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Timms, rh Stephen	Warman, Matt
Tolhurst, Kelly	Watson, Tom
Tracey, Craig	West, Catherine
Tredinnick, David	Western, Matt
Trickett, Jon	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Turley, Anna	Whitfield, Martin
Twigg, Derek	Whitford, Dr Philippa
Twigg, Stephen	Whittaker, Craig
Twist, Liz	Williams, Hywel
Umunna, Chuka	Williams, Dr Paul
Vaizey, rh Mr Edward	Williamson, Chris
Vaz, rh Keith	Wilson, Phil
Vaz, Valerie	Wishart, Pete
Vickers, Martin	Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Walker, Mr Charles	Woodcock, John
Walker, Mr Robin	Yasin, Mohammad
Walker, Thelma	Zeichner, Daniel

Question accordingly negated.

Deferred Divisions

EDUCATION

That the draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 25 February, be approved.

The House divided: Ayes 538, Noes 21.

Votes cast by Members for constituencies in England:
Ayes 482, Noes 14.

Division No. 381]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane	Betts, Mr Clive
Abrahams, Debbie	Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
Adams, Nigel	Blomfield, Paul
Afolami, Bim	Blunt, Crispin
Afriyie, Adam	Boles, Nick
Aldous, Peter	Bone, Mr Peter
Ali, Rushanara	Bottomley, Sir Peter
Allan, Lucy	Bowie, Andrew
Allen, Heidi	Brabin, Tracy
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Bradley, Ben
Amesbury, Mike	Bradley, rh Karen
Amess, Sir David	Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Andrew, Stuart	Brady, Sir Graham
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Brake, rh Tom
Argar, Edward	Braverman, Suella
Ashworth, Jonathan	Brennan, Kevin
Atkins, Victoria	Brereton, Jack
Austin, Ian	Bridgen, Andrew
Bacon, Mr Richard	Brine, Steve
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi	Brokenshire, rh James
Bailey, Mr Adrian	Brown, Lyn
Baker, Mr Steve	Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Baldwin, Harriett	Bruce, Fiona
Barclay, rh Stephen	Bryant, Chris
Baron, Mr John	Buck, Ms Karen
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Buckland, Robert
Bebb, Guto	Burden, Richard
Beckett, rh Margaret	Burghart, Alex
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Burgon, Richard
Benn, rh Hilary	Burns, Conor
Benyon, rh Richard	Burt, rh Alistair
Beresford, Sir Paul	Butler, Dawn
Berger, Luciana (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Vicky Foxcroft</i>)	Byrne, rh Liam
Berry, Jake	Cable, rh Sir Vince
	Cadbury, Ruth

Cairns, rh Alun	Eagle, Ms Angela
Campbell, rh Sir Alan	Eagle, Maria
Campbell, Mr Ronnie	Efford, Clive
Carden, Dan	Elliott, Julie
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair	Ellis, Michael
Cartledge, James	Ellman, Dame Louise
Cash, Sir William	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Caulfield, Maria	Elmore, Chris
Chalk, Alex	Esterson, Bill
Champion, Sarah	Eustice, George
Chapman, Jenny	Evans, Chris
Charalambous, Bambos	Evans, Mr Nigel
Chishti, Rehman	Evennett, rh Sir David
Churchill, Jo	Fabricant, Michael
Clark, Colin	Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Clark, rh Greg	Farrelly, Paul
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Farron, Tim
Clarke, Mr Simon	Field, rh Mark
Cleverly, James	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Clwyd, rh Ann	Fletcher, Colleen
Coffey, Dr Thérèse	Flint, rh Caroline
Collins, Damian	Ford, Vicky
Cooper, Julie	Foster, Kevin
Cooper, Rosie	Fovargue, Yvonne
Cooper, rh Yvette	Fox, rh Dr Liam
Corbyn, rh Jeremy	Foxcroft, Vicky
Costa, Alberto	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Courts, Robert	Frazer, Lucy
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey	Freeman, George
Coyle, Neil	Freer, Mike
Crabb, rh Stephen	Frith, James
Creagh, Mary	Furniss, Gill
Creasy, Stella	Gaffney, Hugh
Crouch, Tracey	Gale, rh Sir Roger
Cruddas, Jon	Gapes, Mike
Cryer, John	Gardiner, Barry
Cummins, Judith	Garnier, Mark
Cunningham, Alex	Gauke, rh Mr David
Cunningham, Mr Jim	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Daby, Janet	Gibb, rh Nick
Dakin, Nic	Gill, Preet Kaur
Davey, rh Sir Edward	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
David, Wayne	Glen, John
Davies, Chris	Glendon, Mary
Davies, David T. C.	Godsiff, Mr Roger
Davies, Geraint	Goldsmith, Zac
Davies, Glyn	Goodman, Helen
Davies, Mims	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Davis, rh Mr David	Gove, rh Michael
De Cordova, Marsha	Graham, Luke
De Piero, Gloria	Graham, Richard
Debbonaire, Thangam	Grant, Bill
Dent Coad, Emma	Grant, Mrs Helen
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh	Grayling, rh Chris
Dinenage, Caroline	Green, Chris
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Green, rh Damian
Docherty, Leo	Green, Kate
Dodds, Anneliese	Greening, rh Justine
Donelan, Michelle	Greenwood, Lilian
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Greenwood, Margaret
Doughty, Stephen	Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Dowd, Peter	Griffith, Nia
Dowden, Oliver	Griffiths, Andrew
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Grogan, John
Drax, Richard	Gwynne, Andrew
Drew, Dr David	Gyimah, Mr Sam
Dromey, Jack	Haigh, Louise
Duddridge, James	Hair, Kirstene
Duffield, Rosie	Halfon, rh Robert
Duguid, David	Hall, Luke
Duncan, rh Sir Alan	Hamilton, Fabian
Dunne, rh Mr Philip	Hammond, rh Mr Philip

Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Carolyn
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Healey, rh John
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kwarteng, Kwasi

Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Lee, Karen
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Leslie, Mr Chris
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, Clive
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lidington, rh Mr David
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malhotra, Seema
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, John
 Mann, Scott
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Masterton, Paul
 Matheson, Christian
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Moore, Damien
 Moran, Layla

Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, Grahame
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Nandy, Lisa
 Neill, Robert
 Newton, Sarah
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, Jesse
 Norris, Alex
 O'Brien, Neil
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Opperman, Guy
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Parish, Neil
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Perkins, Toby
 Perry, rh Claire
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pound, Stephen
 Pow, Rebecca
 Powell, Lucy
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Redwood, rh John
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Robinson, Mary
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Rowley, Lee
 Ruane, Chris
 Rudd, rh Amber
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd

Rutley, David
 Ryan, rh Joan
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shah, Naz
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Shelbrooke, Alec
 Sherriff, Paula
 Shuker, Mr Gavin
 Siddiq, Tulip(*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Angela
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smith, Royston
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Sobel, Alex
 Soubry, rh Anna
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Spencer, Mark
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevens, Jo
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Streeting, Wes
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stringer, Graham
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, Rishi
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Swinson, Jo
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thomson, Ross
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Throup, Maggie
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Tredinnick, David
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Trickett, Jon

Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tugendhat, Tom
Turley, Anna
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twigg, Stephen
Twist, Liz
Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vaz, Valerie
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Mr Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Walker, Thelma
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Watson, Tom

West, Catherine
Western, Matt
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitfield, Martin
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Williams, Dr Paul
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wilson, Phil
Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Wood, Mike
Woodcock, John
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Jeremy
Zahawi, Nadhim
Zeichner, Daniel

Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Clarke, Mr Simon
Cleverly, James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, Dr Thérèse
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crouch, Tracey
Davies, Chris
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Glyn
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Dinenage, Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Dodds, rh Nigel
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.

Hair, Kirstene
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, rh Mr Philip
Hammond, Stephen
Hancock, rh Matt
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harrington, Richard
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Simon
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heapey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Heaton-Jones, Peter
Henderson, Gordon
Herbert, rh Nick
Hermon, Lady
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Hobhouse, Wera
Hollingbery, George
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Howell, John
Huddleston, Nigel
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
Hurd, rh Mr Nick
Jack, Mr Alister
James, Margot
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkyne, Andrea
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Kennedy, Seema
Kerr, Stephen
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Andrea
Lee, Dr Phillip
Lefroy, Jeremy
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Brandon
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lidington, rh Mr David
Little Pengelly, Emma
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan

NOES

Blackman, Bob
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Chope, Sir Christopher
Davies, Philip
Dodds, rh Nigel
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Elphicke, Charlie
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Girvan, Paul
Gray, James
Hollobone, Mr Philip

Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Offord, Dr Matthew
Onasanya, Fiona
Robinson, Gavin
Shannon, Jim
Spellar, rh John
Vickers, Martin
Wilson, rh Sammy

Question accordingly agreed to.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (ANIMALS)

That the draft Animal Welfare (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 31 January, be approved.

The House divided: Ayes 322, Noes 15.

Division No. 382]

AYES

Abrahams, Debbie
Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy
Amess, Sir David
Andrew, Stuart
Argar, Edward
Atkins, Victoria
Austin, Ian
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Stephen
Baron, Mr John
Bebb, Guto
Bellingham, Sir Henry
Benyon, rh Richard
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, Jake
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Boles, Nick
Bone, Mr Peter

Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Brokenshire, rh James
Bruce, Fiona
Buckland, Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, Conor
Burt, rh Alistair
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, Colin
Clark, rh Greg

Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Dowden, Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan, rh Sir Alan
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Ellis, Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Charlie
Eustice, George
Evans, Mr Nigel
Evennett, rh Sir David
Fabricant, Michael
Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Field, rh Mark
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garnier, Mark
Gauke, rh Mr David
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goldsmith, Zac
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Luke
Graham, Richard
Grant, Bill
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Greening, rh Justine
Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Griffiths, Andrew
Gyimah, Mr Sam

Hobhouse, Wera
Hollingbery, George
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Howell, John
Huddleston, Nigel
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
Hurd, rh Mr Nick
Jack, Mr Alister
James, Margot
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkyne, Andrea
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnson, Joseph
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Mr Marcus
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Kennedy, Seema
Kerr, Stephen
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kwarteng, Kwasi
Lamont, John
Lancaster, rh Mark
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Andrea
Lee, Dr Phillip
Lefroy, Jeremy
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Brandon
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lidington, rh Mr David
Little Pengelly, Emma
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Maclean, Rachel
Main, Mrs Anne
Mak, Alan

Malthouse, Kit
Mann, Scott
Masterton, Paul
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Maynard, Paul
McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
McVey, rh Ms Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalf, Stephen
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Milton, rh Anne
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Moore, Damien
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morgan, rh Nicky
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morton, Wendy
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, Dr Andrew
Neill, Robert
Newton, Sarah
Nokes, rh Caroline
Norman, Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Parish, Neil
Patel, rh Priti
Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Perry, rh Claire
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, Victoria
Prisk, Mr Mark
Pritchard, Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, Jeremy
Quince, Will
Raab, rh Dominic
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Rudd, rh Amber
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Rutley, David
Sandbach, Antoinette

Scully, Paul
Seely, Mr Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, Alok
Shelbrooke, Alec
Simpson, David
Simpson, rh Mr Keith
Skidmore, Chris
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
Spencer, Mark
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stewart, Rory
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, Rishi
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Sweeney, Mr Paul
Swire, rh Sir Hugo
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Thomson, Ross
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Tredinnick, David
Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tugendhat, Tom
Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Mr Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Jeremy
Zahawi, Nadhim

Soubry, rh Anna
Williams, Hywel

Wollaston, Dr Sarah
Woodcock, John

Question accordingly agreed to.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (AGRICULTURE)

That the draft Rural Development (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 13 February, be approved.

The House divided: Ayes 316, Noes 239.

Division No. 383]

AYES

Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy
Amess, Sir David
Andrew, Stuart
Argar, Edward
Atkins, Victoria
Austin, Ian
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Stephen
Baron, Mr John
Bebb, Guto
Bellingham, Sir Henry
Benyon, rh Richard
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, Jake
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Boles, Nick
Bone, Mr Peter
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Brokenshire, rh James
Bruce, Fiona
Buckland, Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, Conor
Burt, rh Alistair
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, Colin
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Clarke, Mr Simon
Cleverly, James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, Dr Thérèse
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crouch, Tracey
Davies, Chris
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Glyn
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Dinenage, Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Dowden, Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan, rh Sir Alan
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Ellis, Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Charlie
Eustice, George
Evans, Mr Nigel
Evennett, rh Sir David
Fabricant, Michael
Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Field, rh Mark
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garner, Mark
Gauke, rh Mr David
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goldsmith, Zac
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Luke
Graham, Richard
Grant, Bill
Grant, Mrs Helen

NOES

Allen, Heidi
Berger, Luciana (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Leslie*)
Edwards, Jonathan
Godsiff, Mr Roger
Lake, Ben

Leslie, Mr Chris
Lucas, Caroline
Ryan, rh Joan
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shuker, Mr Gavin
Smith, Angela

Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Greening, rh Justine
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Hair, Kirstene
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lidington, rh Mr David
 Little Pengelly, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack

Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, Scott
 Masterton, Paul
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Moore, Damien
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Neill, Robert
 Newton, Sarah
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Perry, rh Claire
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Rudd, rh Amber
 Rutley, David
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim

Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Shelbrooke, Alec
 Simpson, David
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Spencer, Mark
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, Rishi
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomson, Ross
 Throup, Maggie

Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Tredinnick, David
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Zahawi, Nadhim

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bailey, Mr Adrian
 Barron, rh Sir Kevin
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burden, Richard
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie
 Carden, Dan
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Jenny
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Cooper, Julie
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Coyle, Neil
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon

Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 De Cordova, Marsha
 De Piero, Gloria
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farrelly, Paul
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gill, Preet Kaur

Glindon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Diana
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Lee, Karen
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz

McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Nandy, Lisa
 Norris, Alex
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Powell, Lucy
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sherriff, Paula
 Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast
 by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stevens, Jo
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna

Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine

Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Williams, Hywel
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, Phil
 Woodcock, John
 Zeichner, Daniel

Question accordingly agreed to.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (AGRICULTURE)

That the draft Rural Development (Rules and Decisions) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 13 February, be approved.

The House divided: Ayes 316, Noes 240.

Division No. 384]

AYES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Andrew, Stuart
 Argar, Edward
 Atkins, Victoria
 Austin, Ian
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Mrs Kemi
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Stephen
 Baron, Mr John
 Bebb, Guto
 Bellingham, Sir Henry
 Benyon, rh Richard
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, Jake
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Boles, Nick
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Brereton, Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buckland, Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, Conor
 Burt, rh Alistair
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, Colin
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Cleverly, James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, Chris
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Glyn
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Dinanage, Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Dowden, Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Dunne, rh Mr Philip
 Ellis, Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Eustice, George
 Evans, Mr Nigel
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Fabricant, Michael
 Fallon, rh Sir Michael
 Field, rh Mark
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Gauke, rh Mr David

Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Luke
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Bill
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Greening, rh Justine
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Hair, Kirstene
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Simon
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Heaton-Jones, Peter
 Henderson, Gordon
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hermon, Lady
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick
 Jack, Mr Alister
 James, Margot
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnson, Joseph
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, Gillian
 Kennedy, Seema
 Kerr, Stephen
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Lancaster, rh Mark
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea

Lee, Dr Phillip
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lidington, rh Mr David
 Little Pengelly, Emma
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mann, Scott
 Masterton, Paul
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, rh Anne
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Moore, Damien
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morgan, rh Nicky
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morton, Wendy
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Neill, Robert
 Newton, Sarah
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Perry, rh Claire
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob

Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Rudd, rh Amber
 Rutley, David
 Sandbach, Antoinette
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Shelbrooke, Alec
 Simpson, David
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline
 Spencer, Mark
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, Rishi

Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Thomson, Ross
 Throup, Maggie
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Tredinnick, David
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggins, Bill
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Zahawi, Nadhim

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bailey, Mr Adrian
 Barron, rh Sir Kevin
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burden, Richard
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie
 Carden, Dan
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Jenny
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Cooper, Julie

Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Coyle, Neil
 Creagh, Mary
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Cunningham, Mr Jim
 Daby, Janet
 Dakin, Nic
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 De Cordova, Marsha
 De Piero, Gloria
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dent Coad, Emma
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Dodds, rh Nigel
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Drew, Dr David
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellman, Dame Louise
 Elmore, Chris

Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farrelly, Paul
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flint, rh Caroline
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Frith, James
 Furniss, Gill
 Gaffney, Hugh
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Godsiff, Mr Roger
 Goodman, Helen
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Grogan, John
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanson, rh David
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayman, Sue
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Howarth, rh Mr George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Diana
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald

Jones, Graham P.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Sarah
 Jones, Susan Elan
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Killen, Ged
 Kyle, Peter
 Laird, Lesley
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Lee, Karen
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lewis, Mr Ivan
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lucas, Ian C.
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Mann, John
 Marsden, Gordon
 Martin, Sandy
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McInnes, Liz
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward

Moon, Mrs Madeleine
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Nandy, Lisa
 Norris, Alex
 Onasanya, Fiona
 Onn, Melanie
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owen, Albert
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pearce, Teresa
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Platt, Jo
 Pollard, Luke
 Pound, Stephen
 Powell, Lucy
 Rashid, Faisal
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rodda, Matt
 Rowley, Danielle
 Ruane, Chris
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sherriff, Paula

Siddiq, Tulip (*Proxy vote cast by Vicky Foxcroft*)
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smeeth, Ruth
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Eleanor
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Laura
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Smyth, Karin
 Snell, Gareth
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stevens, Jo
 Streeting, Wes
 Sweeney, Mr Paul
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turley, Anna
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walker, Thelma
 Watson, Tom
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitfield, Martin
 Williams, Hywel
 Williams, Dr Paul
 Wilson, Phil
 Woodcock, John
 Zeichner, Daniel

Question accordingly agreed to.

Westminster Hall

Wednesday 27 March 2019

[MR CLIVE BETTS *in the Chair*]

Modern Slavery and Victim Support

9.30 am

Mr Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered modern slavery and victim support.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship today, Mr Betts. The debate is on an important subject and I am pleased to see that the chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on human trafficking and modern slavery, the hon. Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker), is here, as well as my hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Swansea East (Carolyn Harris), ready to engage us with speeches about what it is right to do. I thank them for attending.

People are often surprised to learn that modern slavery exists in the UK. When I talk to them, it is quite peculiar that they do not quite recognise it. However, once they are aware of it, they are surprised to learn it is not happening out of sight. There is a disconnect between the sense—mostly historical—of what slavery is, and surprise at the idea that 136,000 men and women in the UK are the victims of what we would term modern slavery. The victims are in full sight, not hidden from us. It is just that we do not see them. They are the women in suburban salons, who are beaten to get them to do work they are not paid for, the men who work 20 hours a day in unlicensed car washes where illnesses from chemicals can result in death, or those whose families back home are regularly threatened so that they will stay to do the work.

Some years ago, the Centre for Social Justice, which I set up, produced a report called “It Happens Here” and, I am pleased to say that, in that wake of that, the United Kingdom became a world leader with the passing of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. I believe that it was the gold standard for legislation to eradicate human trafficking. However, that does not mean we can afford to be complacent. I was proud of the Government when they passed the Act, and I remain proud that we are the nation that has given the lead, but I believe that if we are not careful there could be a tendency to believe that what we have done is enough, and that there is nothing more we can or should do to improve on it.

I want today to focus on victim support, which I think is the weakest element of the 2015 Act, although others’ views may differ. The Act does not establish a statutory framework for care services. Nor does it provide a clear pathway for victims to move from exploitation to recovery. In England and Wales the Government provide victims with a limited period of care on a non-statutory basis while the authorities decide whether the person is a victim—but then the support ends. To address those weaknesses Lord McColl and I are sponsoring the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill. It has passed all necessary stages in the House of Lords as well as its

First Reading in the Commons. Unfortunately, it is still awaiting a date for Second Reading. I remain frankly perplexed as to why the Government will not, in general terms, think about adopting the measures in the Bill and in doing so reaffirm the UK’s position as the world leader in the fight against modern slavery.

The Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill would amend the 2015 Act in two crucial ways. First, it would put into law victims’ entitlement to support throughout the critical period when evidence to ascertain whether modern slavery has taken place is being collected. That is an important point. The provision would give people a sense of security. Secondly, the Bill would introduce a statutory duty to provide victims with ongoing support and leave to remain for a period of up to 12 months.

Maggie Throup (Erewash) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on securing this important debate on an issue that we should not forget. Does he agree that if we provide more support for the victims of slavery over a longer period, there will be an opportunity to gain more intelligence, leading to the further prosecutions that are so vital to stamping out this evil practice?

Mr Duncan Smith: That is absolutely right. It is a matter of balance—it is not only about supporting someone but ascertaining who has done what, and making sure that there are prosecutions. As my hon. Friend points out, we must ensure that practical and effective victim support is in place to prevent re-trafficking, while redoubling efforts to prosecute traffickers.

To be fair, over the past two years the Government have matched commitment with action, allocating the necessary resources, but I believe that they are not getting value for money, owing to restrictions in the 2015 Act. In 2017 a report by the Select Committee on Work and Pensions concluded that although the Act was a great step forward it did not establish a pathway for victim support. The National Audit Office noted:

“The Home Office has no assurance that victims are not trafficked again, potentially undermining the support given through the NRM”.

The national referral mechanism is the gateway for adult victims to receive support, and the NAO makes an important point about what is happening to people, and whether it happens to them again and again. It is vital for us to establish that. There is significant evidence of victims with a positive conclusive grounds decision being left homeless and destitute, and therefore at risk of being re-trafficked at the end of the NRM process. Not only are victims at risk of re-trafficking, but limited support creates a barrier to increasing conviction rates for traffickers. If we want to get after them, we need to reduce those barriers.

A Cabinet Office report has concluded that the lack of sustained support for victims is a key factor affecting the bringing of successful prosecutions, so I would like to ask my hon. Friend the Minister what steps are being taken to respond to that report. It is not the view only of the Cabinet Office. Many police forces will say the same. I accept that the Government have recognised some of these challenges and they announced new plans for victim support in October 2017. However, having talked to those involved in supporting people who have been trafficked, I believe that the proposals do not address the primary problems.

[Mr Duncan Smith]

The extension of the move-on period following a positive conclusive grounds decision from 14 days to 45 days still leaves insufficient time for victims to establish a stable foundation for the future. In particular, it is not long enough to enable non-UK nationals to apply for and be granted discretionary leave to remain, which in turn gives victims access to housing, benefits and other services for a period of 12 to 30 months. The Government have stated that rather than a period of leave being provided to all victims, leave to remain should be provided only on a discretionary, case-by-case basis. However, there is evidence that victims fall through the gaps. A victim who is later granted leave to remain can even become homeless while waiting for a discretionary leave decision to be made, because the 45 day move-on period is not long enough to bridge the gap.

I do not want to seem ungrateful, because I believe that the Government's heart is in the right place. However, the extension to 45 days will in all likelihood just postpone the point at which a victim faces homelessness, and not prevent it. If prevention is what we are after, we should try to achieve it. I therefore ask the Minister what information she has about the length of time taken for a discretionary leave application to be processed and how she proposes to guarantee that no victim will fall off the edge of support while waiting for a decision.

I understand that there are plans to offer up to six months' access to drop-in services and improve local authorities' response to victims. That appears on the surface to be helpful, but I am none the less concerned that it will meet the needs only of victims with a right to stay in the UK. That will leave an awful lot of people without such protection. Importantly, charities that support victims and that have left the NRM have told the Home Affairs Committee that drop-in services

"will not be sufficient for somebody who has more complex needs, who needs much more intensive intervention".

I saw the chairman of the all-party parliamentary group nodding at that. It is a fact that there is now strong evidence coming in from the charities involved in this.

I have a third question for my hon. Friend the Minister. Can she explain, when she has the opportunity, what types of support the drop-in services announced in October 2017 will provide, and whether they will be open to those victims who do not have leave to remain in the UK? That is a critical question.

The Government have, I believe, expressed concern that offering all confirmed victims leave to remain for 12 months could create what they called a "pull factor", increasing false claims and potentially creating a loophole in the immigration system. I have sympathy for my Government's view, yet I believe those fears are well overstated. After all, victims cannot refer themselves in to the national referral mechanism; that can only be done by a designated first responder, which is an accountable organisation. It is also the role of the two-stage national referral mechanism process, as specified, to filter out any false claims that are not immediately identifiable by first responders.

The Government have also cautioned that false claims may be made by foreign criminals to avoid deportation. Yet, surely, if one really thinks about it, anyone seeking to avoid deportation by claiming to be a victim will be

able to enter the NRM, irrespective of what support is or is not available after the NRM process. That argument does not seem to stack up when one considers it.

In the case of confirmed victims who also have criminal records, it is important to balance their vulnerability as a victim with the need to protect the public. That is precisely what the victim support Bill does, through an exception that excludes serious sexual and violent offenders who pose a genuine and immediate threat from receiving leave to remain. That is made clear in the Bill that Lord McColl initiated in the Lords and that is still sitting without, I think, much chance of a Second Reading in the Commons.

The suggestions that people will game the system mask the sad truth—this is perhaps the most dangerous part of what I am saying—that many victims are very reluctant to disclose their genuine circumstances or identify as a victim because of threats from their traffickers. We should not underestimate that: those threats and that fear and the system making them worried mean that they will not disclose those things to the authorities.

The Home Office is aware of that. After all, as I understand it, it has been made explicitly clear in the guidance provided to frontline staff, which is an interesting point. Surely the far greater problem is the sizeable number of people identified as potential victims who do not consent to enter the NRM each year. That must be the giveaway as to where the problem arises. Persuading victims to provide the police with information about their traffickers is often difficult, with a perceived lack of long-term protection as a key factor.

Of all that I am saying today, this is the bit that worries me the most; we are forcing many people to dive down again, back into that black place, because they are genuinely scared of what will happen and they believe the protections are simply not there. It is our purpose in this place to speak for them.

A support service that leaves people at risk of further trafficking cannot be cost-effective. The National Audit Office highlighted this in its 2017 report, saying the Home Office has

"no assurance that victims are not trafficked again, potentially undermining the support given through the NRM".

That is an important point; the NAO is basically opening up the question of whether this really works and, if it does not work, how it can be cost-effective.

I genuinely welcome the digitised NRM system that is being introduced—it is a good move—but recording that victims have been re-trafficked is only a start and cannot be a proper answer to this problem. The issue is ultimately one of prevention, ensuring they are not vulnerable to re-trafficking, stopping that as early as possible and giving them that assurance.

To conclude, although I understand that time is running out for the victim support Bill to receive a Second Reading in the Commons during this parliamentary Session—time is running out for quite a lot of other things as well, it must be said—the legislation is none the less incredibly well suited to inclusion in the Queen's Speech later this year. I would love nothing more than for the Government to look to adopt the provisions and recommendations in the Bill. It is not a single-party issue but a cross-party one, as I hope will be reflected in the comments made by my colleagues on both sides of the House.

I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to give this matter serious consideration. Such a Bill would show a genuinely compassionate Government, as I believe them to be, who have every right to be proud of their record but none the less seek to reaffirm their commitment to eradicating modern slavery. I hope she will also make time to meet me to discuss the proposed section 50 regulations prior to their being tabled.

I am committed to ensuring that the necessary steps are taken to ensure that the Modern Slavery Act is effective and offers victims the support they very much need. We have made a good start, but we should not sit back. We must recognise that all we have done is expose the problems that exist within the system. If we exist for anything in this place, ultimately, we exist to be the spokespeople for the most vulnerable, who have nobody else to speak for them. That is why I asked for this debate.

Mr Clive Betts (in the Chair): I have seven hon. Members wanting to speak, which gives us about six minutes each. I ask hon. Members to respect that, please.

9.46 am

Vernon Coaker (Gedling) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) not only on securing this important debate, but on his excellent presentation and the content of his remarks. I must say that I agreed with every single word.

There are many officers of the all-party parliamentary group here supporting the right hon. Gentleman, and they will no doubt make their own contributions, but I want to start out by echoing what he has just said; this is not a party political issue. From my other challenges to her, the Minister will know that although the Modern Slavery Act was a tremendous, landmark piece of legislation, and it would be ridiculous to say otherwise, it would be remiss of us not to say that there are issues we need to raise. We are not doing that to be negative; we want to challenge the system by saying, “Come on, wake up and let’s do things a bit quicker.”

I will put the matter in context for those who watch our debates. Here we are in this beautiful Parliament, in this wonderful Chamber, yet half a mile away—a quarter of a mile, even—there will be people who are victims of trafficking and slavery. It is unbelievable in 2019 that that is the case. When the right hon. Gentleman spoke with such passion, it was to say to the system, “Surely we can do better.”

The statistics that the National Crime Agency released just a week or so ago are stark. They represent huge increases. I know we can say that that is because of greater awareness and such things, but when we have figures showing a 36% increase in the number of referrals in a year, there is no doubt that they signify a growing problem in our country.

I say to the Minister that it has come to something when the starkest increase in those figures is in the identification of child victims of exploitation. It is unbelievable to see that the referrals for children rose by 48% in comparison with 2017. They come into the care of the state, and many of them are, as the right hon. Gentleman said, going missing. Of course nobody wants that to happen, but when ECPAT UK—Every Child

Protected Against Trafficking—is telling us that, according to its research, 15% go missing at least once, and 190 went missing permanently, it is a national disgrace. It is not that the Minister wants that to be happening, but it is a wake-up call for all of us to say that we should do more and do better.

Victim support is a crucial part of this. I say to the Minister that I cannot for the life of me understand why the Government are to an extent resisting Lord McColl’s Bill. Everything that the Government do is to try to improve victim support. If people have a conclusive grounds decision under the NRM, they will get 45 days. For most people, it is just impossible for their immigration status, even if it is a case of special discretionary leave, to be sorted out in that time, so they go into a twilight world. That is the reality.

I say to the Minister again that the whole system is bedevilled by the clash between the desire to support victims, and the immigration system. I think that we have to be a bit braver as a country and say that of course we want a fair and effective immigration system, and one that works, but we are not going to have a system that, because that is our priority, puts victims of trafficking and slavery at risk. There is a policy clash, and I know that the Minister is aware of it. I suspect that she goes and argues that and perhaps does not get the response that she wants, because in my mind I can hear her arguing what I am saying and others in government saying, “Unfortunately, we have to be careful, because it will be a pull factor and people will be swarming into the country on the basis of saying that they are victims of trafficking.” That is nonsense, and the Government need to sort it out. I very much support Lord McColl’s Bill.

I shall conclude my remarks to keep to six minutes, but I want to challenge the Minister. Section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which relates to guidance about supporting victims, has still not been enacted three or four years after the Bill was, so the statutory guidance has not been dealt with. I know that the Minister is to consult on it and that different groups are interested. I should have declared at the beginning of my speech my entry in the Register of Members’ Financial Interests about my links to the Human Trafficking Foundation. I just say to the Minister that there is a desire for broader consultation on the matter with the sector, and I think that that is important.

Finally, if we look at the child victims of trafficking in the system, it is astonishing to see that the majority of those children are British. The majority of trafficked children referred to the national referral mechanism are British. Surely it is a wake-up call to all of us, when we lecture the rest of the world, that we have a real problem ourselves—generally, because of county lines, and because of the experts. All of us know that this is a very real challenge. The children of our country deserve better and the victims of this country deserve much better support than they are getting at present. That is the challenge for all of us, and I know that the Minister will take it forward.

9.53 am

Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con): It is a huge pleasure to follow my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) and the hon. Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker),

[*Andrew Selous*]

who chairs the all-party group. I have the honour of being one of his vice-chairs, and if I may say so, he does a very good job indeed in leading the group.

William Wilberforce was and remains one of my heroes and inspirations for coming into politics. As my right hon. Friend said, it is unbelievable that the practice that Wilberforce campaigned against so forcefully, over 40 years, all those centuries ago is still so prevalent today. I believe in social justice, and this could not be a more significant social justice issue, as the chair of the all-party group so powerfully said.

I have worked with many non-governmental organisations in this space. I shall mention just a few: the International Justice Mission, Hope for Justice, STOP THE TRAFFIK and the A21 Campaign. There are many others. If there are some organisations represented behind me in the Public Gallery that I have not mentioned, they should consider themselves praised as well. They all do brilliant work and we need every single one of them in this fight.

This issue got a little more real for me when in leafy south Bedfordshire, in a wonderful village in my constituency one Sunday morning, 200 police officers went on to a Traveller site and liberated 24 victims of modern slavery, 19 of whom were British, just to follow up the point made by the chair of the all-party group. What was even worse was that the same thing happened again on that site on two subsequent occasions. We are here this morning to stop re-trafficking. In my constituency, I have had that example of where this has happened again and again on the same site. That is not something that any of us should stand for.

I declare a slight family interest, in that my daughter Camilla is doing sterling work, as a medical student, to explain to other clinicians the role of the national health service in spotting victims of modern slavery in order to bring it to an end. That is so important and I will explain why. A few years ago the all-party group met a young English learning disabled man who had been kept as a slave on a Traveller site in Wales. He broke his leg during that time and was taken to a hospital in Wales. No one spotted that he had no English family with him. Irish Travellers were dealing with his care; they got him in and got him out and did not take him back for any of his physiotherapy. He was then held prisoner, effectively, as a slave, for many more years. We met his parent in the all-party group, and one thing that they asked for was that national insurance contributions for his time in slavery be credited to him so that he did not lose out on his state pension. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister might update us on that issue; I have mentioned it to her before. I think that she was battling with the Treasury on it and perhaps she will have good news for us later. What happened to that young man was a disgrace.

That goes to the heart of the debate. It is about stopping people being re-trafficked, whether the same thing is being done again and again just at one site, as happened in my constituency, or whether the wonderful clinicians and other people—the doctors, nurses and healthcare assistants—who work in our NHS are failing to take an opportunity to spot that someone is a victim of modern slavery. That is why this issue matters so much.

Maggie Throup: My hon. Friend talks about medics having a responsibility, but we, too, have a responsibility. I am sure that many of us unwittingly go to car washes and nail bars where there are undoubtedly victims of slavery. We need to be more aware of that and get that message out.

Andrew Selous: I go to more car washes than nail bars, but my hon. Friend is absolutely right. Actually, I can think of one place that I go to and I feel guilty that I have not yet checked what is happening there. I think that there is a campaign—perhaps other hon. Members will speak about it—whereby we can check; I think that there is some sort of certification scheme. It would be a good thing for all of us to make those checks.

I think that we will get more prosecutions if we have a longer period of safety for people. I note that England and Wales are behind Scotland and Northern Ireland. As a proud Englishman as well as a proud Brit, I am not happy with that; I want us to be among the best in this country. I note the comments of the National Audit Office, which are sensible and measured. It is looking across Government and looking at what works and at value for money for the taxpayer. The NAO wants change. There is also the Crown Prosecution Service and the cross-party Select Committee on Work and Pensions; all are making the same points.

It strikes me that we have a proud tradition of giving asylum in this country, and rightly so—it is part of what makes us civilised—and asylum is given on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution, but for the people we are discussing, it is not a case of a well-founded fear; they are actual victims. They have actually suffered persecution; there is not a fear that it might happen. Of course, for some asylum seekers, it has also already happened. Why do we treat victims of modern slavery, who have been persecuted, worse than asylum seekers who have a well-justified fear? Of course, giving asylum is the right thing to do, as I said, for asylum seekers. We know that the individuals we are discussing today cannot self-refer; they will go through all the proper immigration procedures.

I was pleased to see, in the Free for Good briefing that we were sent, that there is an onus on the home countries of foreign victims of modern slavery to do their bit to provide a safe, independent future for those victims in their home countries. That may not be possible for everyone, but we should put pressure on some of the home countries, whether it be Nigeria, Vietnam or wherever. Perhaps people need a new identity. Perhaps they need help to move back to a different part of their home country so that they are safe there as well.

9.59 am

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): I am glad to speak on this most important subject. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) on securing this debate and on his outstanding introduction. My only criticism is that he did not leave much for the rest of us to add—he truly was brilliant. I encourage people who read the transcript to share his speech far and wide, so that people can understand where we are, how we got here and where we might go.

It is important that, when we meet people in the course of our normal work, we say that this is happening under our noses. My hon. Friend the Member for Gedling

(Vernon Coaker) mentioned that it is happening close to here. We walk past it and drive past it. We might unwittingly go into such establishments. It happens on our estates. It behoves us to make a stand and say that it is unacceptable in all of its forms in our community.

There is a high level of understanding of this across the House and everybody is appalled, but we have to ask whether we are doing enough. As the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green said, we brought in world-leading flagship legislation but, three years on, has it done what we want it to do and could we develop it? That does not imply criticism of Home Office Minister—far from it. In many ways we are pioneers, but that means we will have to learn along the way, by looking at what we can do better.

I echo the call for Lord McColl's Bill to have Government time in the Chamber. If it cannot, what is the hold-up? We know that 45 days passes in the blink of an eye for people recovering from this incredibly traumatic experience. My hon. Friend the Member for Gedling touched on the practicalities of entering the system. From our personal casework, we know that 45 days is no time whatsoever to help people to unpick exceptionally difficult trauma and understand, having had all their agency removed, what they wish to do with their life. For many people, 12 months would feel like a tight period of time, but it would give those individuals better time for proper reflection.

Not everybody would need that. I was with a brilliant charity in Nottingham a few weeks ago—the Micu Bogdan Foundation—which specialises in support services for Romanian men, specifically in helping Romanian men go home if that is what they wish to do. Some do not want that, but many do. To have that quick contact and then leave is absolutely fine, but we need to put the victim at the heart of that, and to finally hear their voice after they have had it taken away for so long. To give them that agency back is a profound thing for us to do. I am interested to hear the Minister's reflections on rights to work. We have a high level of political consensus that work is exceptionally important for an individual to build their life around and give them dignity, so I am not convinced that having someone sat staring at four walls and reliving a trauma is the most effective way to help them rebuild their lives.

I know the Minister has put a lot of personal investment into reforming and improving the national referral mechanism. When I talk to victims, I always ask them about their experience in the NRM after I have asked them about their experience being trafficked and exploited. The two experiences are eerily similar. They say, "I don't really know what's happening. I don't have a choice over where I am living. I have been moved at short notice." That will not do. We need clarity in the NRM. The system might be complicated because of the nature of investigations, but we have to get at least a little more dignity into it. I know the Minister is committed to that, but I would be interested to hear a little bit more on it.

We should welcome the review of the Modern Slavery Act chaired by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Frank Field). That is a good sign that there is a genuine desire for dialogue and improvement in the Home Office. I hope we look at what comes out of that. I recently left the Select Committee on Home Affairs, where the hon. Member for Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East (Stuart C. McDonald) does outstanding work on these matters. I hope that, when the slavery report comes out, the Home Office will listen and try to improve.

There are many causes for optimism. I am pleased that 85 councils have signed the Co-operative party's charter against modern slavery. I am a proud Co-operative party MP. I bug the Minister a lot on the enforcement and monitoring of section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. We are moving, but I would like us to be moving a little bit quicker. I hope we hear more about what the Minister plans to do with those who do not comply, but big business—a turnover of £37 million or more—is only one part of it. The collective purchasing power of local government is absolutely massive. Having local authorities come together to say, "We don't want to be part of this either and we will ensure that we are not," and holding themselves to that section 54 standard is very good, but Ministers may want to consider whether the public sector should be covered by it more generally.

There is a lot to reflect on. In a positive spirit, we should be proud that we have world-leading legislation, and that other countries have picked up the banner and sought to do the same. Three years on, it is important to say that we share a view that we want to get victims out of their difficult situations, and help them to rebuild and live a full and happy life. We now need to ask whether what we are doing in statute promotes that. As I said, that does not imply criticism—it is just time to develop the legislation.

10.6 am

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): Two days ago, 25 March, marked the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Tragically, slavery is not merely an historical relic. In fact, more people are in slavery today than during all the years of the transatlantic slave trade between the 15th and 19th centuries combined. A staggering 40 million people globally are victims of modern day slavery. That excludes tens of millions of child labourers.

Through the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the UK sought to take a lead in tackling this tragic scourge of our age, but there is unfinished business. Trafficked victims need more support, hence I fully support the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill, and the excellent speech and work of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith). The Bill seeks to improve the assistance and support for victims over a 12-month period, which is still short given the trauma they have experienced. Much support is needed, such as safe accommodation, financial assistance, medical help, counselling, a support worker, appropriate information, translation and interpretation services, legal assistance and help with representation.

I want to focus on the fact that helping victims to rebuild their lives in this way should give them increased stability, confidence and trust with the authorities, so that they can engage with police, prosecutors, courts and others, which can be daunting even for those who have not been through a traumatic experience. That is essential, if we are to prosecute and convict the perpetrators of this terrible crime of selling a fellow human being, and to deter others from doing the same.

I am pleased to see the Minister in her place. In a debate in this Chamber on 9 October, 2018, she said:

"Law enforcement is a vital part of this picture. We want to successfully investigate and prosecute those who ensnare human beings in their gangs or slavery networks."

[Fiona Bruce]

She added:

“We have invested £8.5 million to transform the police response”.—[*Official Report*, 9 October 2018; Vol. 647, c. 82WH.]

I would be grateful if she could update us on that work. Without better engagement and enforcement, we will never see this trade stop. That will require better engagement with the victims.

Reducing modern day slavery requires a far greater increase in the number of successful prosecutions of traffickers. In many cases, victims have vital information, which can be the key to achieving convictions. However, unless they are well supported, and have stability and confidence in their future, many will be simply too afraid to engage with the police. It can take a significant time for them to begin to trust enough to engage with prosecutions.

We need to increase the number of successful prosecutions. The National Audit Office report, “Reducing modern slavery”, said that

“victims agreeing to act as witnesses and then being available for the trial”

is a key complexity of bringing modern slavery cases to court. In January, a representative of the Crown Prosecution Service told the Home Affairs Committee that a Cabinet Office deep dive into the reasons for the low number of prosecutions highlighted the

“lack of sustained support for victims”

as a key factor. The former Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner stated that

“one of the best forms of intelligence and information is from the victims, and if we are continually letting them down, how are we ever going to get the prosecutions and the confidence of victims to come forward?”.

The Work and Pensions Committee has recognised that a lack of sustained support is a barrier to successful prosecutions and leaves traffickers at liberty to exploit future victims. Last year, Nusrat Uddin, a solicitor with experience of representing victims of modern slavery, undertook research into the different support systems available for victims in the UK and other countries. Her report highlights:

“The prosecution process can be a long and complicated process and without this support in place, victims struggle to engage”

with the criminal justice system. After comparing different systems, she concludes that

“both the US and the other European countries offer long term support workers”

for as long as victims of trafficking require. Since the enactment of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, she continues,

“there has been increased funding announced for law enforcement dealing with trafficking, however this research shows that funding will be futile without appropriate investment in support services.”

Cases have been reported of victims becoming homeless after leaving a safe house and of the police being unable to trace them to take evidence. Those findings are echoed by case studies shared with the Home Affairs Committee by a representative of the Snowdrop Project in December, who reported that a survivor who had given evidence against his traffickers had said:

“If I wasn’t being supported right now, I wouldn’t think about going and giving evidence against my traffickers”.

His traffickers were eventually sentenced to a total of 43 years in prison—convictions that would most likely not have happened if the man had not been given support through the process.

We need the Government to make sustained support a priority, not just because it is right for victims, but because it is vital to increasing prosecutions and stopping criminals exploiting more vulnerable people. It is a matter of promoting justice and stopping one of the gravest injustices of our, or any, age.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Clive Betts (in the Chair): Order. I ask the remaining three speakers to limit their speeches to five minutes.

10.12 am

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) on securing this debate on a vital issue and on the timeliness of having it during the week of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) for his work as chair of the all-party parliamentary group.

We have already heard about the inadequacy of domestic legislation on victim support, and we all know that referrals of suspected victims of modern slavery in the UK have risen dramatically in the last five years. Between 2017 and 2018, according to the National Crime Agency, the number of potential victims of modern slavery referred by the West Midlands police to the national referral mechanism rose from 85 to 117—an increase of 32%—of which 28 were exploited as minors. Of the 45 referred by Birmingham City Council in 2018, 38 were exploited as minors, which is the most in any local authority. We cannot afford to be complacent about this problem.

I welcome the important steps that Birmingham City Council is taking to tackle modern slavery, including producing a modern slavery transparency statement to comply with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which requires transparency in supply chains. Can the Minister tell us what the Government are doing to ensure that they are compliant in all their procurement and outsourcing? The 2015 Act gave courts the power to make reparation orders against anyone convicted of modern slavery offences, which requires them to pay damages to those who had suffered at their hands. Can the Minister tell us how many such orders have been made, what the total sum paid in reparations is, and what the average payout has been?

According to Hestia’s report this week, prosecutions for perpetrators of modern slavery offences remain low, with only 7% of recorded cases of modern slavery being referred to the Crown Prosecution Service. Does the Minister think that is good enough? What steps are being taken to ensure that perpetrators of modern slavery face justice?

Reparations are not enough; the support required for survivors is more than just monetary. Unless modern slavery is tackled head on, local authorities will continue to have to pick up the pieces, and our already stretched

local support services will obviously face additional pressures. Survivors deserve the best care and the Government cannot continue to abdicate responsibility by palming that off. First, however, we need to identify potential victims, so frontline staff need training and expertise on signs and indications, and they need a clear and obvious route to report potential cases to be investigated.

Victims deserve the ability to rebuild their lives following the statutory support period that they are entitled to. Initiatives such as the Co-operative Group's Bright Future programme seek to help victims back into work. Will the Minister support the extension of that scheme to other co-ops and businesses?

Modern slavery is not just an issue in the UK. Alliance 8.7 is the global partnership to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour around the world and it estimates that around the world 40 million people are in modern slavery and 152 million children are in child labour. Gender-based inequalities and discrimination are the primary causes of slavery for women and girls, according to Urmila Bhoola, UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. Of the 5 million people who are victims of forced commercial sexual exploitation, more than 99% are female. Meanwhile, men are more likely to be victims of forced labour in construction.

We can take steps domestically and internationally. What discussions has the Minister had with colleagues to ensure that businesses operating in the UK detail all the actions taken to investigate their global supply chains for modern slavery and labour violations, including forced labour?

10.16 am

Bill Grant (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) for securing the debate.

Modern slavery is no less abhorrent than the appalling inhumanity of earlier centuries. In that era, Robert Burns described, "Man's inhumanity to man", which still exists to this day. As has been mentioned, William Wilberforce's name is synonymous with the anti-slavery movement, having devoted much, if not all, of his life to the cause. In 1807, he finally convinced Parliament to prohibit the slave trade, although it was not until 1883 that there was what we believed to be a total abolition of slavery. It is unforgivable that parts of our society have regressed to such an extent that that outlawed practice appears to have been resurrected.

Today's victims have their personal identity documents seized by traffickers to entrap them, and they are intimidated with threatened violence should they seek freedom from what I describe as the blight of bondage. That prevents victims from reaching out for the help that should be there for them. It is unacceptable that human trafficking involving men, woman and children happens at all, that it is rife throughout many parts of our country, the United Kingdom, and that those from both within and outwith the UK are subject to it.

In 2017, there was a 38% rise in the number of trafficking referrals to Police Scotland, which I applaud for having a dedicated human trafficking unit. The force has issued advice to landlords and letting agencies

to raise awareness that trafficked people often live in or are forced to work in rented properties. However, we must be alert to the potential for human trafficking on our doorstep, as has been said, and we must ensure that we as members of the public are proactive in reporting any suspicions to our respective police forces. The police cannot do it alone—they need our help to gather intelligence.

It is to be welcomed that the Scottish Government have issued "Slavery and human trafficking: guidance for businesses" and are providing funding to Migrant Help and TARA—the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance—which are two organisations that provide welcome support to victims of trafficking. In 2017, the Prime Minister launched a call to action to eliminate modern slavery and human trafficking. I am pleased that the call was endorsed by more than 75 other countries, which have pledged to act to eradicate such repulsive practices. Pressure must be applied on other countries and nations to end modern slavery.

I trust that all Governments will continue to play their part in tackling predatory traffickers, including by ensuring that they are swiftly brought to justice and receive sentences proportionate to their crimes, and that they will ensure that the victims receive appropriate support to recover from what I can only imagine must be a horrific set of circumstances to experience and live in. I reinforce that by specifically asking the Minister to work with others to bring an end to the scourge that is modern slavery and to introduce legislation to assist in achieving that worthwhile and important goal.

10.19 am

Gareth Snell (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): I congratulate the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith)—I nearly said "north London", to be quite honest—on securing this debate. I also thank the Minister, as I know she takes this issue very seriously.

I will echo some of the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) about the non-party political nature of this debate. I have been to a number of debates on this issue in this House where, regardless of political party, of where a Member comes from in the country and of our personal politics, there is a clear understanding that this is a problem that we can tackle. Collectively, we have the ability to tackle it and Lord McColl's Bill gives us the vehicle to tackle it. If we can make progress with that, we will take a huge step forward in securing equality and justice for those people who have suffered at the hands of some of the most unscrupulous people in our country.

I also agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) about the work being done by the right hon. Members for Birkenhead (Frank Field) and for Basingstoke (Mrs Miller). The Modern Slavery Act 2015 was a starting point; it was never an end point. It was never meant to be the be-all and end-all of the process. It was introduced to say, "We have a problem. Here is how we can start to fix it, but this has to evolve over time to reflect the nature of the problem that we have in this country."

I fear that modern slavery on a small scale—the individual cases—does not necessarily get the traction that it deserves. I will just tell a little story, if I may,

[Gareth Snell]

about a constituent of mine, who contacted me regarding concerns that he had about social care. He is an elderly gentleman who lives in a very nice part of my constituency. He did not want to sell his house to go into residential care, so he told me that he had read about a scheme, one that he thought was very sensible and very logical, whereby he could have somebody come from abroad who could live in his house, who he would feed and give a bit of pocket money to, and in return they would help him with his domestic care arrangements. In his mind, that was a perfectly acceptable, almost magnanimous, thing that he could do to help somebody from overseas who he knew was less fortunate than him. I talked him through it, explaining that that was actually modern slavery—that was somebody who would be in tied employment to him. He did not see it like that. He does now, I hasten to add, but at the time he saw it as a way both to help somebody and to get some of the help that he needs.

As we talk about the process going forward, we need to be very clear that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham North said, the big companies will be covered by the 2015 Act and by the declarations, but these smaller situations, where individuals do not realise that they are perpetrating a crime and the victims do not realise that they are being subjected to a crime, need to be teased out.

The hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous) talked about asylum seekers versus those who are victims of modern slavery. I think the reason for that is that somebody can self-refer to the asylum programme but they cannot self-refer to the modern slavery referral mechanism. Could the Minister say whether that is something that the Government will look at?

I will not take up any more time, Mr Betts, but all I will say finally is that we know, because we have debated this in this Chamber and in the main Chamber on numerous occasions, that there is a growing problem, a growing need for change and a growing opportunity for change. Organisations such as the Co-operative party, whose charter has been signed by many cross-party councils, show that there are practical solutions to offer help. The Co-operative Group, through its Bright Future programme, offers jobs to people who have been found to be victims of modern slavery. However, these are all ad hoc things that are being done in spite of Government rather than with Government.

All I hope is that, at the end of this debate, the Minister can take back to the Government and the Leader of the House the message that some time to debate Lord McColl's Bill is all we are asking for, so that we can make progress and help those people who need our help most.

Mr Clive Betts (in the Chair): I thank all Members for their co-operation; that is very good indeed. We move on now to the Front Benchers, who will have 10 minutes each, so that there are a few minutes for the Member who secured the debate to wind up at the end.

10.23 am

Stuart C. McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP): It is good to see you in the Chair, Mr Betts. I pay tribute to the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith),

not only for securing this debate but for the work that he and Lord McColl have done on their legislation, and indeed for his very powerful and comprehensive speech.

I also pay tribute to the all-party parliamentary group on human trafficking and modern slavery, which is chaired very ably by the hon. Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker)—I pay tribute to him and all his colleagues from the group. I have to say that, on the very rare occasions that I make it along to a meeting of the APPG, the knowledge and expertise on display puts me to shame, but I share the APPG's commitment to the cause, as all hon. Members do, which has been demonstrated by the range of excellent and comprehensive speeches we have heard.

It is appropriate to pay tribute, as the hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous) did, to all the fantastic groups providing support to the victims of these awful crimes, as well as campaigning for reform. As hon. Members have said, it is tragic that this range of crimes is so prevalent in the 21st century in the United Kingdom. The figures and the historical perspective provided by the hon. Member for Congleton (Fiona Bruce) were horrifying.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 was welcome and world-leading. Of course, it was very quickly followed by equivalents—indeed, almost replicas—in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The review of the legislation announced by the Government was therefore also welcome and, as anticipated, the reports produced by the review group have been both thorough and helpful. However, as I understand it, the scope of the review does not address head-on the issue of support for survivors, so this debate is a timely and welcome way to fill that gap.

Members have raised a number of issues, primarily about immigration status and the possibility of a statutory support scheme, so I will address those first of all. Regarding immigration status, the starting point has to be the Work and Pensions Committee report on modern slavery, which made powerful points about the complexity and the dubiety surrounding victims' immigration status and their access to support after going through the NRM process. Some victims will be recognised as refugees; there will be a smaller number of non-European economic area nationals who obtain discretionary leave automatically; and there will be a similarly small number of EEA nationals who can apply for that discretionary leave. Other EEA nationals will find it difficult to show that they are exercising treaty rights at all and will have significant difficulty in accessing benefits. Many more victims will have no immigration leave at all.

During the course of the Work and Pensions Committee inquiry into modern slavery, Baroness Butler-Sloss, who is obviously an expert, told the Committee that the lack of any form of automatic entitlement for victims of trafficking while they take even basic steps to rebuild their lives is a "ludicrous situation". The previous anti-slavery commissioner pointed out that there is precedent in the two years' leave given to victims of modern slavery who are here under the immigration rules as domestic servants.

The Committee recommended that all confirmed victims of modern slavery be given at least one year's leave to remain with recourse to benefits and services. Even though that is not what every single victim would want, as the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) pointed out—he is very sadly missed on the Home Affairs Committee—it would provide significant support and encouragement for victims of modern slavery.

Add to that the simple fact that, if imminent removal from the country is a realistic consequence of coming forward as a victim of trafficking, it makes it harder to encourage them to come forward in the first place, and therefore it also makes it more difficult for us to be able to prosecute the traffickers and the perpetrators of these crimes. For all those reasons, we support the recommendations of the Work and Pensions Committee on automatic immigration status.

I support the assessment of the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green of the pull-factor arguments sometimes put by the Government. I add the simple point that we should build our system around fear of what those who want to abuse it might do. First and foremost, the system has to be built and shaped around the needs of victims, and it is an open-and-shut case for automatic immigration leave.

Members have highlighted the fact that there is no statutory provision for support in the 2015 Act. Such a provision was written into the slightly later legislation in Northern Ireland and Scotland. That highlights the benefit of going second, when it is possible to reflect and build on what has gone before. Groups working on behalf of victims believe that the statutory underpinning of support is helpful, and the Government should address that and look to replicate it.

Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP): The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 came before the Modern Slavery Act 2015—it was passed in January 2015—yet we had that statutory provision for support beyond the 45 days. However, the hon. Gentleman will know that that support is constrained—it is provided only if a victim has leave to remain in the United Kingdom. While recognising that immigration matters are still reserved matters, we see that any future change would have a knock-on impact, so that the service provision in Scotland and Northern Ireland—albeit that we are ahead of the curve at this stage—would need to be replicated for victims who do not have entitlement to remain.

Stuart C. McDonald: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman for correcting me and he makes a valid point about how all these things are rolled up together.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about the length of support, the Government have moved from 15 to 45 days, which is very welcome. The Scottish Government recently consulted victims and groups that support them, and opted for an extension to 90 days. I am not engaging in a bidding war here, but simply making an attempt to best reflect the complex process of recovering from the trauma of being trafficked. There is a good case that a period of 90 days better allows people to move on from the NRM process to access housing, to apply for social security, and to apply for discretionary leave, to which Members have referred. We may need to go further in Scotland, but it is about looking at the evidence and seeing what works best.

This has been mentioned, but I hope that the Government desist in their drive to cut support to those who are going through the NRM, which was struck down in court late last year. In my view, the level of support for asylum seekers is outrageously low. If the Government want to level the rates, they should be levelling up and not down, and saving themselves money by strengthening

the right to work for asylum seekers and those going through the NRM, as pointed out by the hon. Member for Nottingham North.

The chair of the all-party parliamentary group on human trafficking and modern slavery, the hon. Member for Gedling, highlighted the number of kids who are going missing. The review panel has only just published its third interim report on support for children. At first glance, it seems to acknowledge that the Government have done good things, but also makes positive recommendations about what can be done better. It mentions the acceleration of the roll-out of independent child trafficking advocates, and the length of time they are allowed to engage with children.

Although beyond the scope of the review group support, it was noticeable that it appears to be positive about the fact that, in Northern Ireland and Scotland, all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children had access to a guardian, so that support arrives even before NRM decisions. That does not address the fact that the majority of child victims are UK citizens, a point made by the hon. Member for Gedling, but it flags up the possibility that providing support for kids who are going through the NRM is one way of stopping so many of them from going missing.

There are a million other issues that we could have touched upon and have not, such as national insurance, public awareness raising, asking people to be vigilant, legal aid, reparation procedures, police and frontline training, and so on. In reality, we probably need an afternoon in the Chamber to discuss all aspects. I recognise again that there is commitment across the House to tackling this problem and a genuine desire to get as close as possible to eliminating it. We will continue to revisit the subject and keep pressure on the Home Office to deliver, but I recognise that there is commitment from every part of the House. I thank the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green again for bringing the debate.

10.32 am

Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. It is also a pleasure to speak from the Front Bench in support of my friend, the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith). We have campaigned together on many issues and I congratulate him on his excellent speech.

During my time as an MP I have spent many hours working with vulnerable groups, from prostitutes to victims of trafficking. I have heard some terribly heartbreaking stories about victims of modern slavery, who have been exploited, terrorised, trafficked and stripped of their rights. Not 10 miles from here I cried with a woman who was forced to sell sex, and whose children were used as a weapon against her to prevent her from reporting the situation. In every nail bar in the country that I visit, I check, like Miss Marple, to see whether there are any signs of trafficking. That is not because I am nosy—although I am—but because it is so easy today for people to be trafficked and forced to do work that they should not be forced into doing.

Support and assistance for potential victims of modern slavery does not have statutory underpinning. That creates several issues, not least the fact that vulnerable individuals are left open to potentially being re-trafficked.

[Carolyn Harris]

That is why it is vital that significant support is available to these individuals, to help them in their devastating situations and stop them being re-trafficked.

Figures, which Members will be aware of, released by the National Crime Agency a couple of weeks ago showed that the number of reported potential trafficking and modern slavery victims had risen by 36% in a year. A hugely worrying trend in that increase was the alarming number of young people. Referrals for minors who were potential victims rose by 48% on the previous year's records; that is partly down to children being forced to sell drugs as part of the county lines phenomenon.

ECPAT UK reported that children make up nearly half of all victims of modern slavery in the UK. They are involved in labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and organ harvesting. Central Government fund an annual £9 million contract for the delivery of specialist support in England and Wales to adult victims. That is not enough to support the adults and children who are victims or potential victims of modern slavery, and the Government must properly resource and fund services to do that.

Worryingly, the Human Trafficking Foundation has highlighted the lack of records about what happens to victims once they have left the referral mechanism. The fact that hugely vulnerable individuals are being lost from the system demonstrates the real danger that they will be re-trafficked, and the fact that they can just disappear highlights the worrying lack of support for these victims. There are currently no guarantees for those who seek help, so it is important that steps are taken to guarantee support for potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery. The National Audit Office concluded that currently the Home Office can offer no assurances that victims are not re-trafficked.

There needs to be a strong, co-ordinated response from all services to tackle modern slavery, and our police forces are at the forefront of that. In 2018, police forces referred 2,084 individuals, but they and other support services must be properly resourced. They must have sufficient funding to support victims and punish the perpetrators of these degrading crimes. It is a matter of urgency that we commit to do more to support survivors of modern slavery, trafficking and domestic violence, to prevent them from being re-trafficked. We must do more to protect the most vulnerable in society.

10.36 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Victoria Atkins): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) for securing this important debate on support for victims of modern slavery. I thank all right hon. and hon. Friends and Members for their collaborative contributions and for challenging me, the Minister, as they are right to do. I thank them for the tone of the debate; it was as is usual in this arena, particularly with Members who are committed to and interested in this subject.

We all agree that modern slavery is a heinous crime, and protecting victims of modern slavery is a responsibility that the Government take extremely seriously. Colleagues have been kind enough to describe the Modern Slavery

Act 2015 as a landmark piece of legislation—it is—but we do not rest on our laurels, and we are always looking to improve on it. I hope colleagues understand that a host of measures support the implementation of the Act. As proof, if it is needed, colleagues can take our decision earlier this year to commission an independent review of the Act. The final interim report was published last week. The reports have been extremely interesting and useful, and I will talk later about one in particular.

I am keen to mention the Prime Minister's call for action at the United Nations. She challenged the rest of the world to pay the same attention to modern slavery as we do, and to join us in our efforts to tackle it. She has set the ambitious target of ridding the world of modern slavery by 2030. Sadly, we all recognise that modern slavery is a crime that knows no international or geographical boundaries.

The hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) rightly challenged me on the transparency of supply chains, as set out in section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. He may be interested to know that after the debate I will be dashing to another part of Westminster to open the 2019 international conference on tackling modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking in public sector supply chains. At the recent G20 meeting, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would become the first country to publish a modern slavery statement for central Government. We will be publishing that statement later this year, and it will cover work done by all central Government Departments. That is a significant step forward.

My hon. Friend the Member for South West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous) challenged us to look at our own supply chains, whether in car washes or nail bars. He was right to mention car washes. I have on my phone the app "Safe Car Wash", and a very useful app it is too, although I confess I clean my car less frequently than I get my nails done. The hon. Member for Swansea East (Carolyn Harris) is right to ask questions as her various beauty treatments are performed. Funnily enough, when I was talking to our new Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, we discussed nail bars. As the beauty industry may or may not know—I do not know whether the letter has gone out—I will be challenging it to ensure that the products employed in its name are used in salons that meet our expectations for the way they treat their members of staff, and the efforts they make to tackle modern slavery.

Similarly, I had the pleasure of visiting Paris just before Paris fashion week for a conference hosted by our British ambassador. The world's fashion industry, from haute couture all the way through to wonderful high-street brands such as Zara, was in the room to talk about how it can ensure that its supply chains are transparent. As a result, a number of British businesses are designing apps that can help consumers decide whether to purchase an item of clothing, depending on what the app tells them about the transparency and compliance of supply chains in the business that made it. All sorts of things are going on to enable us, as individuals, to do our bit to ensure we do not inadvertently support modern slavery.

Colleagues have rightly and understandably mentioned Lord McColl's Bill, and I thank Lord McColl for his continued vital work in this arena. I understand that he is supporting the review with his expertise, and I am

delighted to hear that. I am sorry to say to Members present that the Government do not support the assertion that victims should be automatically granted leave to remain for 12 months. Consideration of whether an individual is a victim of modern slavery and any decisions as to their immigration status are, and must remain, separate. Such decisions are made on an individual, case-by-case basis, and modern slavery is a broad umbrella term that covers a wide spectrum of crime. As we have heard, victims can have very different experiences and needs, so it is right that our approach to granting discretionary leave takes account of that.

We have concerns that a blanket policy of discretionary leave to remain risks incentivising individuals to make false trafficking claims, diverting support and time away from genuine victims. Indeed, on occasion, caseworkers hear very similar stories from victims, which lead them to think that a claim may not be legitimate. However, we are concerned with ensuring that the immigration system runs alongside the national referral mechanism as efficiently as possible. Non-EEA nationals will receive a conclusive grounds decision at the same time as their discretionary leave decision, unless they are claiming asylum; if they are, they will be considered for asylum before they are considered for discretionary leave, because asylum has its own different forms of leave. All victims are supported until they receive a conclusive grounds decision, regardless of how long that takes—the minimum is 45 days, but it may be longer—and confirmed victims get a further 45 days after that. Non-EEA nationals will receive a conclusive grounds decision and a discretionary leave decision, and they will then have 45 days of support.

Hon. Members rightly and understandably raised concerns about re-trafficking, which is one of the great fears of those who work to support victims, whether in the charitable, third sector or law enforcement space. A number of the reforms I will speak about aim to reduce the risk of re-trafficking. For example, we have extended move-on support from 14 days to 45 days so that victims have more time to transition out of NRM support. We are also testing six new approaches with six local authorities, of which Nottinghamshire is one, to identify best practice in linking victims with local services at the end of the NRM process. That is to increase resilience and guard against further exploitation.

Vernon Coaker: I thank the Minister for the contribution she is making, and I ask her to reflect on whether it is possible for us to collect data on what happens to people when they leave the system after 45 days. At the moment, that data is not collected, so we are unaware of what is going on and what happens to people in those circumstances.

Victoria Atkins: The hon. Gentleman has raised that point with me before; I take his point, and I am alert to it. The process will be complex, but that is not a reason for not doing it, so I am looking into that issue.

There have been reforms to the national referral mechanism, and we have already begun to improve the support that victims receive. As I have said, we extended the period of move-on support in February. Victims now receive 45 days of move-on support, in addition to the minimum 45 days of support received during the recovery and reflection period.

The hon. Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) challenged me about the statutory guidance under section 49 of the Act. Guidance is in the process of being drafted,

and it has been shared with NGOs. I am keen to get this done as quickly as possible; the hon. Gentleman asked me whether we could have a wider consultation, but frankly, I think we need to get this done. We have shared that draft guidance with NGOs for their feedback, but I am also mindful of the judgment in the case of *K & AM v. Secretary of State for the Home Department*. I would rather get this done than wait three months, or however long a public consultation takes. However, if colleagues have any observations about the guidance, that would be welcome and gratefully received.

We are identifying more victims than ever before. Last week, the National Crime Agency released the 2018 NRM statistics, which were chilling: 6,993 potential victims were referred to the NRM in 2018, representing a 36% increase since 2017. We are obviously pleased that there is greater awareness of the NRM and how we should treat victims of modern slavery, but it leaves us with the great challenge of how hidden this crime is and the need to help the many thousands of victims who are coming forward. Sadly, we also know about the impact that the phenomenon of county lines is having in this area, which is a subject that many Members have raised. I will address that issue when I come to talk about children.

Mr Duncan Smith: During proceedings on Lord McColl's Bill and in subsequent conversations, the Home Office has consistently referred to pull factors as the reason why it cannot make some of the recommended changes. When I was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, that argument was constantly used, but I was never able to track down the evidence for how those pull factors work; quite often, assumptions are made. I wonder whether, if there is evidence of pull factors, the Minister would be prepared to publish it.

Victoria Atkins: The difficulty I have is that, frankly, there are parts that I cannot publish for operational reasons. There is also emerging evidence of people being trafficked into this country to commit benefit fraud; I recently had a discussion about that with the former Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton). We are conscious, as well, that this is an emerging typology, which we are looking into with the help of the National Crime Agency.

Mr Duncan Smith: When I was Secretary of State, I went on operations related to that issue—it was in existence even then—and I do not recall that it was cited as a pull factor. Benefit fraud is about people being trafficked, with their families back home being threatened. They are brought through for their names and their details, then dumped into prostitution without any details, and claims are made on their behalf. Those people are forced to come over here, and therefore they do not declare or anything like that. That issue was never used as an example of a pull factor; it is clearly a criminal activity, and we have to crack down on the gangs that are doing it. I do not quite see the pull factor for this relatively small number of people, compared with other matters.

Victoria Atkins: Caseworkers are going through cases, and there are strands of applications coming in with very similar stories. I am limited as to what I can say on this occasion, but I will write to my right hon. Friend within the confines of operational matters.

Stuart C. McDonald: I am also very sceptical about the pull factor argument. Even if we were to accept that there is a pull factor, is the key point not that safeguards are in place? People cannot self-refer, and a decision has to be made about whether they are a victim before they get any automatic leave. Is that not sufficient to protect against abuse? Why should we be building the system around fear of abuse, rather than the needs of genuine, recognised victims?

Victoria Atkins: We are not building the system around abuse. We are building the system around the fact that, as has already been mentioned, the largest cohort of referrals to the NRM are British. Modern slavery exists in and of itself, and it sits separately from the asylum system. We must ensure that we have support for victims of modern slavery, as we do through the national referral mechanism. Questions of immigration are in addition to the support they will get through the national referral mechanism. Not every victim of modern slavery or human trafficking is a non-EEA national. The statistics, sadly, show that very clearly.

We are launching a digital system later this spring to help to make our delivery of support much more efficient, and that will help first responders to ensure that victims get into the system as quickly as possible. We are seeing faster decision-making times than ever before. We have more than doubled the number of caseworkers working on the NRM. The single competent authority launched in its shadow form in January 2019 and is on track to be fully launched in April. That single, expert unit will make all NRM decisions, regardless of the potential victims' nationality. That will be a significant step forward, and I hope it will help victims once they are in the system.

Vernon Coaker: In this part of her speech, will the Minister say something about the review process of the Modern Slavery Act 2015? Deliberations are complete and will be with the Government, including measures or recommendations about victim support. For the benefit of the debate, does she know what the consideration of that will be, when the Government expect to respond and whether that response will be published for Parliament so that we can all look at it and discuss it?

Victoria Atkins: I am extremely grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who has helped the review with his expertise. I cannot recall the date off the top of my head, but we have been considering the interim reports as they have been published. We do not want to rush; we want to get it right. Alongside the work on the statutory guidance we are drafting, I am clear that we want a response in good time. We are not going to hang around, but we want to get it right. I very much want to publish it, because Members will want to look at our response.

I must thank the reviewers—the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Frank Field), my right hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mrs Miller) and Baroness Butler-Sloss—and the secretariat for their work in formulating the reports, which have been incredibly thoughtful and focused in their recommendations. I am considering each interim report. I do not know whether the reviewers want to tie all the reports into one big report at the end, but we will be responding soon.

We are conscious of the responsibilities to ensure that the next victim care contract meets the expectations of everyone involved in tackling modern slavery. It will include landmark reforms such as places of safety,

which will provide up to three days of immediate support to victims rescued out of a situation of exploitation by law enforcement. It will include an inspection regime for safe houses. We are working with the Care Quality Commission to develop that, and it will be underpinned by the slavery and trafficking survivor care standards. I am grateful to the sector for its work in drawing that together. In providing support to victims, we must remember that every victim's journey is different. I visited a safe house recently, and that point was re-emphasised to me by every person and resident I spoke to there.

Andrew Selous: I reiterate the question I asked the Minister about the re-crediting of national insurance contributions to British citizens who have been victims of modern slavery so that they do not lose out on a full pension. I understand that she may well not have the answer now, but will she please write to me and place a copy of that letter in the Library of the House to let us know where negotiations with the Treasury have got to on that matter?

Victoria Atkins: I thank my hon. Friend for that observation. If I may, I will write to him about that. He raises an important point.

In terms of post-NRM support, the new victim care contract will include drop-in services, which victims will be able to access for up to six months after leaving the NRM, and weekly signposting on health and wellbeing services. I am conscious of the question that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green posed about indefinite leave to remain, but I am afraid that I cannot comment because of the outstanding case going on at the moment. We are piloting new approaches with six local authority areas to identify best practice in such support.

Many colleagues spoke about the perilous situation that child victims find themselves in. County lines are very much a factor in the increase in children being referred into the national referral mechanism. We have rolled out independent child trafficking advocates to one third of all local authorities in England and Wales, in line with the commitment I made in July last year. We have adapted the system to reflect the fact that children of British nationality who are members of county lines often have different needs from children who perhaps do not speak English and have come from overseas.

I am conscious of the time. I very much welcome the findings of the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act on ICTAs, in particular. The recommendations in the report are child-focused. We are considering the recommendations for improvements that we can make to the service. I confirm that the Government are committed to rolling out that important additional support nationally.

Colleagues mentioned prosecuting offenders. Those were important comments, but I make a slight plea. I know that Members will bear with me if I make the observation that one reason why the withdrawal agreement is so important is so that we have the implementation period—*[Interruption.]* I have to say it. In the implementation period, all our law enforcement partnerships will continue, and that is so important in tackling modern slavery. Apologies to everyone who thought they were going to escape the “B” word.

I am grateful for colleagues' contributions, and I look forward to continuing to work with them on this important topic.

10.58 am

Mr Duncan Smith: I have only a very short time, so I will try to speed through the two points I want to make. I will not follow my hon. Friend the Minister and talk about the provisions of the withdrawal agreement; I simply want to focus on the debate and two issues that it raised.

The 12 months of support proposed by the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill will surely give victims greater support and stability. It is interesting—my hon. Friend the Member for South West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous) raised this point—that unlike someone granted asylum, someone who is confirmed to be a victim of modern-day slavery has no automatic entitlement to ongoing support and residency. Almost the most important point is that we are therefore not able to check that they are safe. They will not come forward to give evidence, we will not get prosecutions, and by not coming forward they are more likely to slide back into being re-trafficked.

I simply thank my hon. Friend the Minister for her response. I hope that we can continue to engage, and I hope that we will continue to make the case that there is more to be done, including with the new Bill. I hope that she will adopt many of the provisions from Lord McColl's Bill into the Queen's Speech, as requested. I would be happy to discuss that matter with her.

Motion lapsed (Standing Order No. 10(6)).

Railway Stations: Accessibility

11 am

Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con): I beg to move,
That this House has considered accessibility at railway stations.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts, and I am looking around as I have constituents who intend to sit in the Public Gallery to hear what I say this morning.

Trains have been and continue to be one of the most important modes of travel in the United Kingdom. According to the Office of Rail and Road, in the past financial year 4,679,220 train journeys were completed every single day. However, even with such a large number of people using the rail network, many stations still lack the facilities to cater for the disabled, the elderly and those struggling with heavy luggage or pushchairs. As Members are aware, to address the issues faced by disabled passengers and passengers with mobility restraints when using railway stations, the Access for All programme was launched in 2006 with £360 million to fund accessible routes from the station entrance to the platform. It was extended in 2014 with a further £163 million. More than 150 stations have been completed and another 68 projects are in various stages of construction or development.

In April 2011 the Government launched a new Access for All mid-tier programme for station access projects. Although funding was originally £17 million, the large number of very strong bids for train station improvements meant that it was increased to £37.5 million and the scheme ran until 2014. According to the Under-Secretary of State for Transport, my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Ms Ghani), Access for All has delivered step-free accessible routes at more than 200 stations since it was launched in 2006 and small access improvements at more than 1,500 stations.

John Howell (Henley) (Con): One of the projects was at Goring station in my constituency. We managed to get lifts to make disabled access possible, but it was quite a bureaucratic process. Does my hon. Friend find that that is the case in other stations?

Dr Offord: As someone who has walked not only the Thames path but the Ridgeway, I have experience of Goring station. I have found the system quite difficult and bureaucratic. It is a lengthy process and people often ask, just like with Brexit, "Why don't you just get on with it?" As I get further into my speech, I will discuss my experience of the Hendon constituency.

Gloria De Piero (Ashfield) (Lab): Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Langley Mill stations, used by my constituents, are a big problem for wheelchair users and mums or dads pushing prams. Making train stations step-free should be a priority in this day and age. Most colleagues here are from towns. Does the hon. Gentleman have any information or can the Minister say whether our towns are being neglected? Or are stations in towns more likely to be step-free than those in our cities?

Dr Offord: Although I went to university in Nottingham, I cannot say I know the hon. Lady's constituency very well, so I will allow the Minister to respond to that point when she sums up.

[*Dr Offord*]

It is obvious that more can and should be done. In April 2017, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report about how disabled people fare in their day-to-day lives in the UK. On transport, the report stated,

“Transport options for disabled people are very limited because of the need to use only transport forms that are accessible, and these tend to be expensive.”

A few months later, in November 2017, the Department for Transport published the results of its research into disabled people’s travel patterns and attitudes to travel. It found that although being disabled does not always lead to less frequent use of train services, it does lead to problems with trains:

“It is well-established that people with disabilities travel less and for different purposes compared with people without disabilities”.

Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood) (Con): I have been campaigning on this for six years in my constituency, in Morley. People get on the train on one side to go into Leeds, but they cannot go back because there are steps. Does my hon. Friend agree that disabled people rely heavily on public services and that it is vital they can access them to ensure good quality of life? The Department for Transport should invest heavily in that area.

Dr Offord: My hon. Friend illustrates a point that I will come on to in my speech. My constituents who are here today feel very strongly about that.

Leonard Cheshire, the UK charity for disabled people, highlights the issues facing many disabled people when trying to access train station platforms. Its research and analysis, based on data provided by the Office of Rail and Road and the National Rail website, shows that more than 40% of railway stations across England do not have step-free access, leaving many disabled people unable to travel by train. Research with more than 1,600 disabled adults shows that 35% of working-age disabled people have experienced problems using trains in the past year as a result of their disability.

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): Staveley station in my constituency, the first station in the Lake District national park, is accessible only by a 41-step staircase. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the problems is having to bid for access funding to provide ramps and lifts? We expect the operator to make a bid, and the operator, in my case Northern, which has not covered itself in glory in recent times, has been reluctant to do so. We should have a top-down approach where perhaps the Minister helps to deliver solutions to, for example, Staveley’s lack of access, directly.

Dr Offord: Having lived in Carlisle for several years, I am also aware of the hon. Gentleman’s constituency and his station. Like my station in Mill Hill, his was constructed at a time when disabled and step-free access was not a top priority. Similarly, Govia Thameslink and Network Rail were not aware of my constituents’ need and desire to have step-free access at Mill Hill Broadway station, so I sympathise with his point of view.

Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con): Like my hon. Friend, I have a London constituency. As he knows, I am bidding to make Upminster station step-free. I can make the Access for All bid only because the

station is operated by c2c rather than Transport for London, and the Mayor has said there is no priority for other stations in my constituency. Will my hon. Friend join me in encouraging the Mayor to invest more of his sizable budget in this area and to look carefully at my request to open up his new £6 million TfL drivers’ toilets to disabled travellers with RADAR keys? It would make a big difference to the quality of their journey if they were able to access facilities.

Dr Offord: As a London MP, I certainly agree with that and I urge the Mayor to allow it to happen. Indeed, I urge the Minister to make representations to the Mayor to allow it to happen. It seems not only a sensible solution to a particular problem, but something that could be rectified easily, so I certainly agree.

Not only disabled people suffer from a lack of step-free access in stations. A Department for Transport study showed that two thirds of disabled people are over the age of 65, and demographic trends predict an increase in the proportion of older people in society. According to the NHS, in the UK falls are the most common cause of injury-related deaths in people over the age of 75. The need for reliable, ever-present step-free access is imperative to ensure such injuries or fatalities do not occur in train stations. The Government’s generous funding commitment to improve station facilities is welcomed by Members present today, but I am sure we all agree that the previously mentioned statistics are of significant concern.

Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con): The issue is not just about people with disabilities. Obviously, we want to improve access for them, but it is also about a range of people. I am the father of a 15-month-old child and we would struggle to use many of our local stations, particularly Langton station in my constituency, where, I am pleased to say, we have an Access for All funding bid in at the moment. Does my hon. Friend agree that we need to improve accessibility at stations not only for people with disabilities, but for everybody?

Dr Offord: I certainly agree. In my constituency, the Thameslink line serves Gatwick and Luton airports. People, including myself, use those trains either very late at night or very early in the morning, and often struggle with heavy bags, as I have recently.

Holly Lynch (Halifax) (Lab): I returned to Westminster from maternity leave this week with my six-month-old baby boy in a pram, and I found using the trains incredibly difficult. My hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Gloria De Piero) made a valid point about towns. We have an accessible lift in Halifax, but it has been my nemesis since I became an MP, as it is regularly locked and regularly broken. However, further to the points that have been made, using the tube in London with a pram was incredibly difficult. We can do so much more on that, so we really have to focus those efforts.

Dr Offord: The hon. Lady’s contribution and those of others have illustrated the problems that many people face, not just those who are disabled. Some 60% of disabled people have no car in their household, but many other people also do not have one, particularly in London. People who, like the hon. Lady, visit London as part of their work will probably not have access to a car when pushing their baby in a buggy. Step-free

access is therefore about not just disabled people, but parents, travellers and people who have general mobility problems.

Julian Sturdy (York Outer) (Con): My hon. Friend is making a powerful argument, and this is an important debate. Does he agree that there is also a problem with different station operators? One of my constituents, who is partially sighted, got on a train at York station, which is run by London North Eastern Railway, and went on that train to Manchester Victoria, which is operated by Northern. The two station operators did not talk to one another, and my constituent was ultimately left on the train—it was a through-station—and carried on past her stop. That is a real problem, and station operators really need to start talking to one another.

Dr Offord: I am grateful for that intervention, because I had a constituent who reported the same problem; he had problems with his vision and had great difficulty in accessing the train service. I understand that point, and agree that train operator companies should talk to one another—whether it is c2c, Transport for London, GTR, Southern or any of the ones that my hon. Friend mentions. I hope that the Minister hears that plea. It should be not only a requirement for train operators but a requirement under disability regulation. I certainly agree with that point.

I have two mainline stations in my constituency: Hendon and Mill Hill Broadway, both of which are on the Thameslink line, which connects Bedford with Brighton and includes stops at St Pancras International, London Bridge, Blackfriars, and Elephant and Castle. Both stations serve the two London airports that I mentioned: Luton and Gatwick. Neither station has adequate step-free access, but I believe that it is true to say that the problem at Mill Hill Broadway is particularly acute.

Mill Hill Broadway is an important interchange for a large number of passengers connecting with buses, the M1 and other modes of transport. The quality of access and subsequent movement around the station is not commensurate with a station catering for about 2.7 million passengers per annum—a figure that will increase significantly in future years as a result of the thousands of new homes being built in the area. We all know that London needs new homes, and Hendon is certainly playing its part, but infrastructure and other public services need to keep up with that redevelopment.

There is no step-free access from the lower concourse where cars and buses arrive at Mill Hill Broadway, so 39 steps must be climbed to access the station. Furthermore, the subway that connects the two platforms is narrow, which raises concerns about congestion and safety at peak times. There is no question that the lack of a lift prevents some of my constituents from using the station. That is a key issue for the disabled, parents with small children, those with suitcases and the area's growing older population. Such passengers are advised to use Elstree and Borehamwood station or West Hampstead station, which, following past upgrades, now have step-free access throughout. I believe something is fundamentally wrong when a passenger has to travel to a station that is not their most local to access our railway network.

I first raised the lack of step-free access at Mill Hill Broadway station five years ago in a question to the then right hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire,

now Lord Lansley. In January 2015, I had the pleasure of inviting the then right hon. Member for Richmond and a former Minister for the Disabled, now Lord Hague, to visit Mill Hill Broadway and understand the concerns that many people had about the lack of access to the station. While we were there, we witnessed a mother struggling to get her buggy up and down the steps from the platform to the ticket office—a prime example of why step-free access will benefit local residents and visitors to Mill Hill.

In 2015, I facilitated a series of meetings of representatives of Barnet Council, Network Rail, Govia Thameslink and Transport for London, and John Gillett of the Mill Hill neighbourhood forum. That resulted in a £60,000 feasibility study to look into the options for step-free access at Mill Hill Broadway. In 2017, I met the then Rail Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys (Paul Maynard), and I raised the matter again in 2018. I believe that that demonstrates the seriousness with which local people, local stakeholders and I view the matter.

Very sadly, the lack of step-free access resulted in the untimely and tragic death of one of my constituents, Mrs Priscilla Tropp. Mrs Tropp tripped on the steps at the end of last year; her widower, Michael, and her daughters, Sara and Deborah, are in the Gallery. I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone in the Chamber when I express my condolences for their loss. As a Member of Parliament, losing a constituent is one of the hardest things to have to go through as an elected representative.

Priscilla was travelling to London up to five days a week for leukaemia treatment. She did not want to be a burden on the NHS, so she decided to make her own way independently, and not to use a taxi or other facilities provided by the NHS. However, she was not well. She was also recovering from a fall that she had sustained at the station earlier in the year—a fall that it appears was not recorded by station staff. She and her husband took all reasonable precautions to avoid a further accident, such as waiting for other passengers to go ahead of them so that they could use the handrail beside the steps and not be an obstacle to other people, but that was not enough. Priscilla tripped and fell, and, due to the general access to and from the platforms, passengers alighting from subsequent trains in what was by then the rush hour were forced to step over and around her.

The defibrillator could not be located, but even if it had been it is likely that space constraints would have meant that use of the equipment would have been restricted. Sadly, as I said, Priscilla died; she did not survive the fall. That tragedy would have been wholly avoided had there been a lift at Mill Hill Broadway. As I have said previously, falls are the most common cause of injury-related deaths in people over the age of 75. Priscilla was 76.

Such statistics are not acceptable, nor is the advice to go to another station several miles away. Our hospitals encourage—even require—patients to make their own way to hospital, but only 44% of London stations offer step-free access, and public transport is often the only means of travel for those who need to visit hospitals. As the NHS has more centres of excellence, people requiring treatment need to use public transport. It must be adequate for those who are less able.

[Dr Offord]

The Government are currently considering bids for the next round of funding under the Access for All programme. As we have heard, the Minister will be looking at many valid representations and applications, but I hope that I have demonstrated the urgent need at Mill Hill Broadway. It is a shared ambition not only of mine and of my constituents, but of Govia Thameslink, Network Rail, TfL and the London Borough of Barnet for long-overdue step-free access, or, in other words, lifts.

I say to the Minister, please, not only to hear my representations and those of other Members, but to make it possible for many of my constituents to access the Thameslink train line for a variety of reasons, including access to public services, hospitals, employment and education. We need a lift, and we need one now. I ask the Minister to consider that.

11.18 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Nusrat Ghani): It is an honour to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Betts. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) on securing the debate, which allows the House the opportunity to discuss the important subject of accessibility to the railway network. I also congratulate him on making such powerful representations on behalf of his constituents.

I recognise how important it is for my hon. Friend's constituents to have access to the railway in order to go to and from work, see family and friends, and go about living their lives. Before I go further, let me say that I would be grateful if my hon. Friend passed on my condolences to the family of his constituent. I understand that the incident has been investigated by the Office of Rail and Road after it was approached by the family. A safety report has been prepared for the inquest, which I believe is due to take place in May. I have not seen the report, and I hope hon. Members understand that it is not appropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Delivering a transport system that is truly accessible to all is of great importance to me. Hon. Members will have seen the Department for Transport inclusive transport strategy, which we published last July and which underlines the Government's commitment to taking action to safeguard and promote the rights of all disabled passengers. We do not deny that our strategy is ambitious, but we are determined to deliver it. By 2030, we want disabled people to have the same access to transport as everyone else, and if physical infrastructure remains a barrier, assistance will play a role in guaranteeing those rights.

Many of our stations are Victorian. Their architectural worth is there for all to see, but their infrastructure is simply not fit for today, which has left us with the huge task of opening up the railway network to disabled passengers. We have a little bit of good news—75% of journeys are already made through step-free stations—but only a fifth of stations have proper step-free access from outside, and to and between platforms. We have therefore continued with the Access for All programme, a key part of the inclusive transport strategy, and committed an additional £300 million of funding from the public purse.

Damien Moore (Southport) (Con): Like the local station of my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Dr Offord), Hillside station in my constituency is a

problem for the disabled people and older people who use it. Given the age demographic in my constituency, it is more important than ever for our Access for All bid to be successful. That would give disabled people and older people the accessibility that they so desperately need.

Ms Ghani: My hon. Friend has made repeated and powerful representations on behalf of his constituency and his local railway stations, and I know he has worked incredibly hard with his local authority and his transport operating company. I cannot make any statements here today, but he has put forward a very substantial case for consideration. Let me set out the timetable for hon. Members: I know that some were concerned that it would take as long as Brexit, but the decision will be out in April.

As I have made clear, we have £300 million to spend on Access for All. We will start on all 27 projects deferred by the 2016 Hendy review of Network Rail delivery, but we will include far more stations. We asked the industry to nominate stations for new funding by 16 November 2018, and received more than 300 nominations. Most came through the train operating companies, but it was not a top-down exercise and involved train operating companies, Members of Parliament, local authorities and councillors working together, because we wanted to ensure that it reflected local need. Nominated stations will be selected on the basis of annual footfall and will be weighted by the incidence of disability in the area.

We are taking local factors into account. The hon. Member for Ashfield (Gloria De Piero) talked about towns being excluded, but we are doing what we can to ensure a good spread up and down the country by looking not only at footfall, but at proximity to hospitals, availability of third-party funding and, crucially, other impacts of accessibility to the station. It is not just about disability, but about other needs—we are thinking about mums with buggies and other accessibility issues that have been mentioned.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon knows, Mill Hill Broadway station and Hendon station in his constituency have both been nominated for Access for All funding. I hope he will understand that I cannot guarantee the inclusion of any single station until we make a formal announcement, but I am happy to tell him that Mill Hill Broadway in particular was a strong candidate when considered alongside other stations across the country.

As the funding application bids closed only last year, I hope hon. Members will agree that it has been a swift process. I intend to announce the selected stations in April, so I hope that those hoping for good news will be kind enough to be patient for just a little longer.

So far, we have installed accessible step-free routes at more than 200 stations, and approximately 1,500 stations have benefited from smaller-scale, but equally important, access improvements. We continue to press the industry to comply with its legal obligations so that work at all stations on the network meets current accessibility standards, and to ensure that the Office of Rail and Road enforces those standards effectively. That applies not only on flagship projects such as Crossrail or the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street, which are delivering significant accessibility improvements, but as part of the “business as usual” work of renewal programmes, such as ensuring that any replacement bridges have lifts or ramps.

It is important for the industry to meet its obligations to anyone who needs assistance, whether they have booked ahead of time or not. Every passenger should expect the best possible help to use the rail network, particularly at stations that do not have fully accessible facilities. As part of its licence to operate services, each operator is required to have a disabled people's protection policy that sets out the services that disabled passengers can expect and what it will do if things go wrong—for example, providing an accessible taxi free of charge to anyone unable to access a particular station. The Office of Rail and Road recently consulted on revised guidance for disabled people's protection policies, and I have encouraged it to take enforcement action against train and station operators that are found not to be meeting their DPPP obligations.

Every disabled passenger should be confident that the assistance that they have booked will be provided. The Department has worked with the Rail Delivery Group to create the new Passenger Assist application, which will make it easier for disabled passengers to book assistance. We also support the Office of Rail and Road proposal to introduce a handover protocol as part of the revised disabled people's protection policy guidance.

We can do more to make the rail network more accessible. We will be introducing a new set of accessibility requirements, such as the introduction and delivery of enhanced disability awareness training for all train operating company staff, regardless of role or seniority. We have also supported the industry's establishment of an independent rail ombudsman with powers to deal with unresolved passenger complaints.

As a councillor, my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent South (Jack Brereton) managed transport in and out of his area. I completely agree with him that we need to look at the issues not just for people with disabilities, but for elderly people and mothers with pushchairs. That is why we have the £300 million in place.

Once again, my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch and Upminster (Julia Lopez) made a very powerful bid

on behalf of her constituency. I hope the Mayor of London is listening. I know he is very ambitious, so I hope he can be ambitious for disabled passengers on the rail network too.

In reply to my hon. Friend the Member for York Outer (Julian Sturdy), I hope the Passenger Assist application, which is coming soon with real-time information, will provide the support needed so that there is no gap for people taking multiple journeys on public transport.

On the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Henley (John Howell), I hope the bureaucratic process will not be as tough as it was previously. The funding bids closed last year for the money that will be available, and the announcement will be made in April. I hope we can make the process as swift as possible.

In reply to the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron), this was not a top-down process. We wanted to ensure that the train operating companies put forward their priorities, but we have also had fantastic representations from Members of Parliament, councils and charitable organisations. I hope our announcement will reflect both geographical spread and actual need up and down the railway lines of our country.

I fear that I am running out of time, so I will conclude by saying that I hope I have demonstrated that the Government are committed to improving access at stations for disabled passengers, both through specific projects such as Access for All and through improvements delivered as part of our wider commitment to improving the rail network. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon and all colleagues for contributing to the debate. The Government remain committed to investment, and we want people to continue to benefit from record levels of funding, including the £300 million Access for All funding that will be so beneficial to so many people.

Question put and agreed to.

11.28 am

Sitting suspended.

Local Government Funding

[MRS ANNE MAIN *in the Chair*]

2.30 pm

Thelma Walker (Colne Valley) (Lab): I beg to move,
That this House has considered local government funding.

It is an honour to serve with you as Chair, Mrs Main.

I start with the wide-ranging responsibilities of our local government. In much of the work that I do in Westminster and in my constituency of Colne Valley, I find myself mentioning local government funding. On the Select Committee on Education, it comes up when discussing alternative provision, support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, education, health and care plans, and school funding more widely. It comes up in speeches and questions on issues such as adult social care, finance, carbon emissions and homelessness, as well as in discussions with colleagues and constituents. The work that local government does covers a broad range of important areas, and affects our constituents' lives in so many ways.

Our local authorities are responsible for public health, support for people with learning disabilities and physical and mental health conditions, and public health programmes, such as those on sexual health and smoking cessation. In education, they support schools, deliver early years education and adult learning, offer youth services and support community engagement. They are also responsible for children's services, local democracy, highways, waste management, libraries, museums, galleries—the list goes on and on.

Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab): On Saturday, I was with a number of Unison members and frontline workers who work in local government. Despite the horrendous cuts of £330 million to my local council, they are doing a brilliant job, but they are now telling me that local government is on its knees. Does my hon. Friend agree?

Thelma Walker: I do agree. I hear the same thing from Unison members—that they have worked so hard and are so committed to delivering services, but they are now crossing red lines where it is not possible to continue.

It is because the work of local government is so widespread that the effects of the cuts have been so far-reaching. The impact has been seen across services and across our country. We know that deprived areas have been hit the hardest, and that Labour councils are due to see falls of 28% on average, compared with a 19% fall for Conservative local authorities. Nine of the 10 most deprived councils in the country have seen cuts of almost three times the national average of £255 per household. Too often, there is a blame game with local authorities, when it is central Government who have cut funding and shifted the burden on to local communities.

Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that it is not just cuts that are having a severe impact on local authorities, but the additional pressures and demand from all the disabled people who have lost access to benefits, from rising homelessness and from the shameful buck-passing of Home Office responsibilities? With no recourse to public funds, families—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Order. The hon. Gentleman is making a speech, not an intervention. I think he has made his point.

Thelma Walker: It is absolutely true that cuts are being made in a time of rising need. We are now at a point where all councils are feeling the pain, and we have even seen one of the Government's own councils effectively declare itself bankrupt. By 2025, it is predicted that local government will face a funding gap of almost £8 billion.

How did we get here? In the name of austerity, round after round of cuts have been dealt to local authorities. Between 2010 and 2020, local authorities will have seen reductions of £16 billion in core Government funding. Adult social care, children's services and homelessness support have been pushed to breaking point. Other services, such as youth centres, museums and libraries, have just closed.

Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab): Will my hon. Friend join me in congratulating Wigan Council on winning council of the year? How much more it could have done had it not had its funding cut by £160 million.

Thelma Walker: I congratulate Wigan Council, and all the council workers who have helped to deliver such success, especially in such trying times.

The situation has occurred in spite of the incredible hard work being done by councillors and council workers across the country. I have seen that at first hand, not just as an MP but as someone who is married to a local councillor. I have seen the hours and the commitment that is put in to support the frontline of government, to build communities, boost life chances and make a difference to everyone's day-to-day life.

In 2018, Unison surveyed council workers and found that 79% are not confident about the future of local services. In my constituency of Colne Valley, 90% of council workers surveyed said that budget cuts in the past two years have had an impact on their ability to do the job as best they can. Can we just think about that figure? Some 90% of the workforce lack confidence in their ability to deliver their service.

I would like to share some feedback from someone in my constituency who worked supporting children and families in children's centres, but now described that work as "destroyed", and the positive outcomes of the work as "overlooked".

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): The hon. Lady is absolutely right to point out that the impact is felt beyond council staff and workers, and particularly on children and families. Will she reflect on the fact that in 2008 there were fewer than 60,000 children in care and that today there are more than 75,000? At the same time, since 2008, there has been a 49% cut in early intervention—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Order. The hon. Gentleman's name is down on the list of speakers. He has made his intervention.

Thelma Walker: I was a headteacher and a teacher for 34 years, and as a member of the Education Committee, I know the impact on children's services and their ability to cope. My constituent described how low-level support for families had been removed, leaving them to

reach crisis point before they received help. With less staff to react to crises, they have been running themselves ragged firefighting. They said:

“I rarely see the public now, but when I do bump into people I used to help, they think I’ve let them down. They feel alone, and I feel responsible.”

We can see the dedication of our council workers, and I know how they feel. As I have said, I was a headteacher at a school in a deprived area with a Sure Start centre attached. Properly funded multi-agency working supported children and families so that they did not end up needing as much support from public health services and other areas.

Graham Stringer (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that the cuts that have been made so far have been exacerbated by the lack of a real tax base in local government and too much central Government interference?

Thelma Walker: I believe that devolved local governance, with local knowledge of the needs of local communities, is really important, and we have lost that.

Early intervention was cost effective in my previous career, and it transformed people’s lives. They were not left to go through the stress and trauma of reaching crisis point. It is better for the health and wellbeing of our communities to have that support in place, but Kirklees was forced to make savings of nearly £200 million over the past nine years. Over the next three years, the council has to find a minimum of £38 million in savings. That has detrimentally affected my constituents’ lives.

In particular, there are significant and growing pressures on high needs in Kirklees. The Government have acknowledged that Kirklees is the second most underfunded council in the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant.

One of my constituents has been in contact with my office for some time about their two children, who have been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum. They have been trying to establish appropriate support for their children through education, health and care plans. It has not been straightforward. Cuts to funding mean that the local authority is struggling to give the family the necessary support.

The pressures are also visible in housing. Another of my constituents, who lives in local authority housing, has been subject to verbal abuse and harassment from their neighbours. They have applied to move, but the housing provider has not been able to facilitate relocation because it does not have suitable places to move them to. It has been able to offer only additional security measures to reassure the constituent. Local authorities and local government workers are doing what they can, but they do not have the resources to do what they need to do. Hard choices have had to be made to protect care for the most vulnerable.

I know that these stories will sound familiar to many hon. Members today. Sadly, such stories are by no means unique to my constituency. But there is an alternative; it does not have to be like this. In Finland, local government has a lot of autonomy, and there is a greater level of responsibility for policy and delivery in areas such as education, healthcare, social services, planning and infrastructure. Decision making is closer to the people and seeks to be responsible for their needs. In Finland,

policy is geared towards commitments to provide housing where it is needed, support those who cannot care for themselves, and provide accessible low-cost childcare to families.

Finland has also trialled a universal basic income. Policies are focused on delivering positive outcomes for citizens on health and wellbeing, and on reducing inequality. Marking those policies as priorities is important and effective. For the second year in a row, Finland has been named as the world’s happiest country, which cannot be a coincidence. There are some real lessons to take forward from countries such as Finland, which could be used to inform the way local government operates in the UK.

Labour is investing in delivering effective and positive change for local government, our communities and the families within them. The next Labour Government will genuinely end austerity and put an end to this crisis. At the last election we pledged £8 billion for social care. We also pledged an additional £500 million a year for Sure Start and early intervention services, to reverse the cuts that have closed centres across the country and to ensure that all children have the best start in life.

Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing the debate today, when we are all thinking about and debating Brexit, and on recognising the impact on services of cuts such as the 50% cut to central Government funding for Newcastle City Council. I want to mention one additional service: litter. It is an issue for my constituents, and children are writing to me to ask why their environment is covered in litter—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Order. Before we go any further, as you can see the Opposition side is very heavy with speakers. There is a list of speakers, and I wish to get everyone in.

Neil Coyle: They could have turned up!

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Please do not argue with the Chair; I am informing you how it is. This House normally has short interventions, and I want to ensure that speakers get in. I am sure the hon. Lady has got the point and would like to carry on with her speech.

Thelma Walker: It is a pity that we do not have better representation on the Conservative Benches.

I was talking about Labour’s vision for how things can be. We will properly fund public health services, establish a new national target to narrow health inequalities, and prioritise the health and wellbeing of every child, which is very dear to my heart. We will give councils £1.5 billion extra for general council services, too. Although that additional funding is important, we have made a commitment to place local government at the heart of our work, giving local councillors a direct voice in central decision making through our local government commission.

To fix our broken political system, where people are left feeling disconnected and disillusioned by politics, we need to put local people and communities at the heart of decision making. Showing local people that Whitehall works for them is the first step in addressing this problem. I want this to be what local government

[*Thelma Walker*]

does and is seen to be doing by the public: building inclusive and cohesive communities, providing accessible care for all who need it, and supporting vulnerable people to promote their life chances.

I applied for the debate to request that the Government rethink the approach to local government funding and make urgent changes to address the crisis facing our councils.

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): As you pointed out, Mrs Main, there is an absence of people on the Government Benches this afternoon, apart from the Minister. Does my hon. Friend agree that that might be because there has been a shift of funding from Labour high-need authorities to Tory authorities with less need?

Thelma Walker: Absolutely; I completely agree with my hon. Friend. It speaks for itself that we do not have representation on the Government Benches.

I hope the Minister is able to take note of the contributions made in today's debate and take meaningful action, instead of recycling tired lines. I will conclude with a quote from Nye Bevan:

"Discontent arises from a knowledge of the possible, as contrasted with the actual."

We know that it does not have to be like this. The public want to see change, and Labour is prepared to deliver it.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Order. Given the number of speakers who wish to participate in this debate, I am immediately imposing a five-minute time limit on speeches. I call Mr Jim Fitzpatrick.

2.45 pm

Jim Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab): It is a pleasure to see you presiding today, Mrs Main, and to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker). She made a fine opening speech, and I congratulate her on securing this important debate. Attention has already been drawn to the imbalance of numbers in attendance, which speaks volumes. It is not rocket science to work out why, but perhaps the Minister, who is an honourable gentleman, might comment on the numbers attending the debate as well as responding to it.

I will make only a short contribution and refer to one briefing from my local authority of Tower Hamlets, and from our excellent Mayor, John Biggs, and the very respected cabinet member for resources, Councillor Candida Ronald. Colleagues will know that Tower Hamlets is one of the poorest boroughs in the country, but it has a rich past, with the Tower of London, Cable Street and the docklands. It has an exciting future as a key part of London's regeneration engine.

Tower Hamlets Council voted to support the "Breaking Point" national campaign, which was set up to call for the Government to properly fund local authorities. Tower Hamlets core funding this year is £148 million lower than in 2010, which is a staggering reduction of 64%. Since 2010, around one third of the council's staffing posts have gone. Future cuts mean that Tower Hamlets must save a further £44 million from its budget over the next three years. Will the Minister advise us how that might be achieved?

While the council has faced cuts from central Government, our borough's population and demand for services have continued to grow. Like other councils, Tower Hamlets continues to face a crisis in adult and children's social care and special educational needs funding. Demand is increasing. Last year alone, the council received almost 4,000 fresh requests for adult social care support—up 8.7% on the previous year.

At the Tower Hamlets full council meeting on 20 March, Mayor Biggs attacked the Government for "putting frontline services at risk."

An important consideration is how austerity has hit other local services such as policing, and the effect on the council's priorities. We have lost more than 200 police officers from the streets of Tower Hamlets. The council's response was to step in and invest £3 million to pay for some of its own officers. Regrettably, that is just one area in which Tower Hamlets Council was forced to cover the gap created by this Government, but it cannot be expected to replace everything.

On fair funding, Tower Hamlets responded to the Government's consultation and raised the following concerns. The first is that it has less emphasis on deprivation. Secondly, it fails to factor in the impact of additional population, which is key in Tower Hamlets, where more than 200,000 commuters travel to each day. Thirdly, fair funding has a notional approach to council tax income and does not give an actual figure, which would significantly penalise authorities that have worked hard to keep their council tax rates low. Finally, the cost of homelessness and temporary accommodation does not adequately form part of the formula, which will impact on high-cost areas, especially London.

Even Tory councils are struggling to cope. It is well known that Northamptonshire County Council effectively declared bankruptcy last year. Nationally, councils now face plugging a further funding gap of £7.8 billion by 2025 just to keep services standing still and meet additional demand. I hope the Government accept that there is a crisis, even if it is not geographically universal. The Government might claim that the era of austerity is over, but it is not even in sight. We need them to step up and recognise that this is a problem.

2.49 pm

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing this debate. In a former life, I was a local councillor and cabinet member so, believe me, I know at first hand about local authorities' opportunities and challenges, which she outlined.

Stockton Council has been ambitious and forward-thinking, and has delivered projects that some said were not possible. It partnered with Hilton and built a hotel in the town, which will complement the reopening of the 2,500-seat Globe theatre, just a short walk away, next year. Our high street won the rising star at the Great British High Street awards in 2016, which is a testament to the effort put in by councillors and staff to make our corner of the world a better place to live. The area has been a beacon for Ministers, a Select Committee and countless others, who came to see those successes for themselves.

My council has been required to deliver savings of about £45 million by the end of this financial year. Like other authorities, it faces an unprecedented growth in

demand, particularly in children's social care services. The total spend for all children's social care services rose from £23 million in 2010-11 to £38 million—nearly double—in 2018-19, despite the reductions in grant funding. I have been told that that is the greatest cost pressure facing local authorities around the country.

Another key problem that has been highlighted to me is the inability of some councils to think ahead due to the uncertainty of local government funding. The spending review is supposed to sort that out, and we have the fair funding review, but sadly I do not feel terribly optimistic about it. Local authorities will retain a greater proportion of business rates, but there is a severe lack of clarity or agreement about how that will work. Large tower blocks in Westminster or Chelsea will raise millions of pounds for their respective councils, but local authorities such as Stockton can expect very little in comparison.

Austerity affects not just the funding that local councils get—the lack of jobs and prospects that go hand in hand with it put additional pressure on families. There is a desperate need for more public health funding to address the inequalities in our society. It is estimated that there are still 19,000 smokers in my Stockton North constituency. Smoking costs my area £37.4 million every year. Some 31% of households with a smoker are below the poverty line. If those people were to give up smoking, 1,991 households would be lifted out of poverty, including 1,342 children. However, public health budgets are being diminished, rather than increased so that we can develop programmes to help people quit, and address obesity, drug misuse and dangerous choices. That is Government failure. It is the result of a reckless Government slashing the vital support services that people depend on and systematically reducing job opportunities not just through austerity but through business and industry uncertainty caused by the threat of a no-deal Brexit.

Ministers love to trumpet the rise in employment and fall in unemployment across the country, but that is not happening in areas such as mine. Unemployment has risen month on month in my area for some considerable time, and local authorities have limited, if any, resources to sort it out. There has been a devolution deal of some Government budgets to the Tees Mayor and the combined authority, but despite the plethora of news releases and ministerial statements about Tees Valley, few new jobs are being created in reality. The Minister must take full responsibility and tell us what the Government will do—he is too busy looking at his phone. The Government are too busy to tell us what people are doing for constituencies such as mine.

I agree with organisations including Action for Children, Barnardo's, the National Children's Bureau and the Children's Society that the spending review must provide additional funding for children and young people's services, and address the estimated £3 billion funding gap that local authorities face by 2025. I agree that there must be a clear link between the likely need and the funding available in each local area. There cannot be a postcode lottery benefiting councils that are aligned with the Government of the day. The children and service users who are in desperate need of social care should and must come first. Importantly, early intervention is key to ensuring that the demand on services does not get out of hand. We must prevent family breakdown,

not just deal with it when it happens, as that costs more money and can severely damage people's lives and future relationships.

This is about political choices and priorities. We simply cannot afford not to spend money. We cannot scrimp and save on children's social care and family support services until there is nothing left but the skeleton.

2.54 pm

Mr Steve Reed (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing this very important and timely debate. Since the Conservative party came to power in 2010, my local authority, Croydon Council, has lost more than 70% of its central Government funding. At the same time, the population is growing. We have higher numbers of older people who need care services, more families have been made homeless because of welfare reform, and more working families are in poverty because of the freezing of working-age benefits and a real-terms reduction in people's wages. Funding cuts and an increase in demand for statutory services such as care and housing means that there is drastically less funding for everything else. That includes services that help tackle the causes of violent youth crime. That is on top of severe cuts in policing. The result of all that is a national knife crime epidemic.

We largely know how to prevent violent youth crime and have successfully stopped it in the past. I was the leader of Lambeth Council in 2007—the last time there was a big increase in violent youth crime. We were the first council to set up what would now be called a public health approach, which means understanding and then treating the causes of violent youth crime, rather than focusing only on the symptoms. We commissioned the country's biggest piece of academic research on violent youth crime, learned the lessons and then funded the services that stopped young people at risk of drifting into criminal behaviour doing so. Violent crime quickly dropped by 30% and continued falling. We know what works, but it requires investment in services, including early intervention with low-level young offenders before they progress on to higher-level offending; mentoring and support that helps offenders not to reoffend; help for families in which children are growing up without the support they need, for instance to develop language and cognitive skills or loving, emotional bonds with their family; treatment for mentally ill people, particularly when it arises from a child experiencing traumatic situations such as sexual or violent abuse; school exclusions, particularly of black boys; and youth activities and diversionary projects that help young people develop healthy relationships, skills and interests that will support them throughout the rest of their lives.

Since 2010, the Government have taken away the funding for those services in every community that needs them the most. They targeted the biggest cuts on the poorest communities, where violent youth crime is the highest. The 10 poorest communities in the country have suffered cuts more than 18 times bigger than the 10 wealthiest communities. By removing those communities' ability to stop violent crime early, it spiralled out of control and spread, leading to what is now called county lines—the export of violent criminal behaviour linked to drug dealing from the areas where it started to everywhere else. That is why the number of deaths on our streets has escalated year after year across the entire country.

[Mr Steve Reed]

Instead of learning from their mistakes, the Government seem determined to keep repeating them. Their ironically named fair funding formula, which comes into force next year, removes deprivation levels from how funding for local services is calculated. The poorest communities will lose even more, and what capacity they have left to stop a further escalation of violent crime will be reduced, so violent crime will rise even faster.

When I asked the Home Office Minister about the need to do more to tackle violent crime, she emphasised the importance of the troubled families work, which is funded by the Minister's Department. That is one of the few areas where the Government have done the right thing. They are funding professionals who bring together support that helps to reduce offending by families who are generating the highest levels of crime. What she did not say, perhaps because she did not know, is that all funding for that programme will come to an end in 12 months' time—March next year. The services are working on their wind-up and closure plans. It is staggeringly short-sighted at a time when violent youth crime is soaring out of control to close down one of the few services that is actually helping. We need more of that kind of work, not less. What action is the Minister taking to ensure the troubled families programme continues after March? What guaranteed funding will the Government make available to ensure that it can continue?

We do not need to wonder how to tackle violent youth crime. We already know. The problem is that the Government have slashed the resources available to tackle it in the communities where it is growing the fastest. We need them to think again.

2.59 pm

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Main. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker)—a near neighbour of mine—on securing this important and timely debate.

I rise to speak as someone who, both as a Member of Parliament and as Mayor of the Sheffield city region, works very closely with our local authorities. Not only do I lead the combined authority of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, but through the Yorkshire leaders board, I work very closely with all of Yorkshire's other local authority leaders. As hon. Members will know, the work of our local authorities is critical to the communities that they are there to serve.

I was out on the doorstep in Barnsley at the weekend talking to my constituents and, although some of them wanted to talk about Brexit—completely understandably—many of them wanted to talk about other things, including bins, potholes, parking, antisocial behaviour and, of course, housing. Those are incredibly important issues that fall to local government.

Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): Will my hon. Friend give way?

3 pm

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

3.15 pm

On resuming—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Given that a Member has just withdrawn from the debate, we now have a little more time for colleagues to speak, so I am extending the limit to seven minutes with immediate effect. Some of you have noticed that the clock has shifted on somewhat. We suspended on the point of an intervention, but perhaps you would like to save it for your speech, Ms Onwurah.

Chi Onwurah indicated assent.

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): We will return to where we left off. You have five minutes and 47 seconds, Mr Jarvis.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): On a point of order, Mrs Main. The Division is still going on and an hon. Member has not yet returned. Should we wait until he returns before we continue the debate?

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): We have already waited for the customary 15 minutes. The proposer of the motion and both Front Benchers are here, so we will carry on.

Dan Jarvis: Thank you, Mrs Main. I am happy to give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central (Chi Onwura).

Chi Onwurah: I thank my hon. Friend for giving way so graciously. He is absolutely right: when we knock on people's doors, we hear about the issues that matter to them. Increasingly over the past nine years since I was elected, constituents have told me that litter is destroying the environment in which they and their children live, because of central Government cuts to local authority and police funding.

Dan Jarvis: My hon. Friend raises an important point that is often raised with me by local residents, as is fly-tipping, which is a big concern for many of my constituents. One of my local residents, Kevin Osborne, has been running a long-standing campaign against the fly-tippers, as has Barnsley Council, which has taken decisive, innovative action to prosecute them. My hon. Friend raises an important point that is of great concern to our constituents.

Before the Division, I was talking about important local issues that fall to local government. We all instinctively understand that councils and councillors work hard every day to improve the lives of our residents, but they face a funding crisis. Austerity has caused huge damage to communities across the country. It has undermined the way we protect children at risk, disabled adults and vulnerable older people, and it has reduced the quantity and quality of community services such as street cleaning, libraries and rubbish collection.

We should be honest about the fact that reduced funding is not just about numbers on a spreadsheet, but about a reduction in the capacity to invest in prevention. The cuts represent a false economy. If councils cannot fund sufficient support for older people, more of them will end up being admitted to hospital. Less money for children's services means our young people will only get by, rather than thrive. Failure to invest in public transport stifles economic growth, isolates communities, reduces social mobility and damages our environment. Those are just a few examples of an austerity agenda that lacks any form of long-term strategy.

Neil Coyle: In cash terms, Southwark has lost 50% of Government funding since 2010 and faces another £8.6 million funding cut this year. Does my hon. Friend agree that it is deceitful of the Prime Minister to claim that austerity is over?

Dan Jarvis: My hon. Friend raises an incredibly important point. Following eight years of austerity and some £7 billion of cuts, neither the autumn Budget nor the more recent spring statement offered any comfort to our local authorities. The Local Government Association has projected that local councils will face a funding gap of £7.8 billion by 2025, and they still face a cut of £1.3 billion next year. Last autumn's Budget offer of £650 million for the coming year is nowhere near enough even to close the funding gap for social care, let alone to address the shortfall in other services. Such concerns cannot be addressed by the piecemeal redistribution of income that we have seen from the Government.

Central and local government need to work together on the fundamental reform of the funding of our community services, and I believe that devolution offers the opportunity to do that. When we get it right, it offers a fairer and more democratic means of governing and delivering, where working people have a greater say in the choices that affect their lives and a greater stake in the services on which they rely. We can seek radical, transformative change to our communities only if those communities can control their destinies themselves. That means that the Government need to listen to and invest in those communities and the leaders they have elected to represent them.

We need to abandon an economic and political model in which the only hope is that wealth will trickle down and prosperity will ripple out. We must replace it with a fully empowered three-tier system of government—local, regional and national—giving each tier the powers and resources that it needs to make a difference in the communities for which it is responsible. Only if we do that correctly will we put the right people at the heart of decision making, end the status quo in which so many people have become disenfranchised, and allow communities to overcome the challenges they face, and thrive. Greater funding and stronger powers for local authorities should be the first step of that journey.

3.20 pm

Gerald Jones (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Main. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on her speech and on securing the debate.

Many of the services that are closest to the people we represent and that many people value and appreciate are delivered by local councils. Many of them, such as collecting refuse, recycling, street cleansing, operating street lighting and keeping street drains clear, are easily identifiable council services but, as we know and as my hon. Friend highlighted, councils do much more. They provide education, social and youth services, libraries, community centres, leisure centres, allotments, play areas, car parks, local tourism and business support. They also facilitate a huge amount of partnership working by acting as the conduit for joint working between police, health, the third sector and others. Many local authorities also still provide housing services and even those that

no longer have housing stock still provide limited private sector housing support and are responsible for taking the lead on tackling homelessness.

I spent the 20 years before I was elected to this place in 2015 as a councillor and cabinet member. I was first elected in 1995. My first experience as a councillor was marred by the huge financial pressures that local authorities were under. I was full of hope at first that I would play a part in making a positive difference to the community that had just elected me. Is not that why we are all elected? However, the council I was elected to was subjected to massive cuts in my first two years as a councillor. Our annual budget was cut by £30 million over two years. That happened from 1995 to 1997, in the dying days of the Thatcher-Major Tory Government.

From 1997, things changed dramatically and for the 13 years under a Labour Government the council's funding increased year on year. There were modest increases in the early years but more significant increases followed—in one year reaching almost 10%. Those were years when local authorities thrived. I recall one year when I was the youth champion for the authority and was able to argue for and obtain an additional £150,000 for youth services in the following year. There are many other examples when funding was available to support local services.

Faisal Rashid (Warrington South) (Lab): Local councils provide vital services to our constituents, whether on fly-tipping, homelessness, adult social care or children's services. Any funding cut is a direct attack on our constituents. Does my hon. Friend agree?

Gerald Jones: I certainly agree, because cuts dilute local authorities' ability to act on behalf of the people they represent.

Local authorities have been at the forefront of strategic partnership working in relation to developing and prioritising projects to secure and utilise European funding and co-ordinating the securing of match funding so that residents get maximum benefit for the investment. That, sadly, will be hugely diminished as we leave the European Union. Despite a promise from the Government they have yet to confirm the mechanics of how the shared prosperity fund will work, which leaves communities to wonder whether the commitment from Conservatives on the leave side who promised that our country would be no worse off was no more than a sop to gain support.

Financial support for local councils started to change in 2010. Since then our local councils and public services have been starved of investment. In Wales, local government is devolved to the Welsh Government and the block grant for the Welsh Government is now some £4 billion less than it was in 2010. In the early years of austerity, the Welsh Government protected councils in Wales from the harsh policies of the Tory-Lib Dem coalition. I remember speaking to local government colleagues in England at the time and hearing the horror stories about how council services were starved of investment. As the years have passed and austerity has continued to bite hard, the ability of Welsh Government to protect local councils has been diminished. Although in Wales the responsibility for local councils lies with the Welsh Government, I am in absolutely no doubt that the cause of the pain being felt by councils and public services in Wales lies with the harsh austerity policies of this Tory Government.

[Gerald Jones]

In the most recent budget round, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council, which cover my constituency, were again forced to cut millions of pounds from their annual budget and they have also been forced, along with many authorities across the UK, to increase the council tax by more than 5%, which has been the maximum upper limit in recent years. Some councils are even starting to use reserves to plug the revenue gap, which is a dangerous precedent. Reserves are often earmarked for specific commitments while the much lower free reserves are there for emergencies and one-off expenditure. As we know, once they are used to plug the gap in revenue funding, greater problems are created for future years.

We have heard in recent debates in the House that cuts to policing have had a big impact in many communities where crime and antisocial behaviour have increased. However, that is exacerbated by the fact that, owing to cuts to council services, there are fewer youth workers, education welfare officers and social workers, and generally less funding for work with the police and partners to manage antisocial behaviour and reduce crime. Local councils play a huge part in crime reduction and in reducing low-level nuisance and antisocial behaviour. We should not underestimate the importance of their role.

In conclusion, in the early years of austerity some local councils and public bodies were able to find efficiencies to make their budgets stretch. People were expected to do more with less money and fewer people, which put remaining staff under increasing pressure. However, after nine years of painful austerity there are no more efficiencies to find. The low-hanging fruit has all been picked long ago. As I said in questions on the spring statement a few weeks ago, all that is left to cut is jobs and frontline services.

I make a plea to the Minister today to recognise the pain that austerity has caused and the fact that local councils are not able to withstand any more cuts. The Government need to show compassion. The services that we are discussing are those closest to the people. We know from press reports that Tory-led councils are also experiencing financial pressures. People are feeling the pain across the country, so please will the Minister give us some hope that austerity really has ended?

3.27 pm

Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing a vital debate, and I pay tribute to council staff. It is rightly fashionable to pay tribute to emergency staff in the health, police and fire services, but sometimes we do not recognise the work done by council staff day in, day out, and by the council leaders and cabinet members who must deliver, on a daily basis, the services our constituents want.

Chi Onwurah: I agree with my hon. Friend, and want to emphasise that councillors and officials in Newcastle City Council are under huge pressure, working not to implement the cuts for the public. They deserve our thanks.

Yasmin Qureshi: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention.

We are all aware of the fact that post-industrial towns and cities in the north of England such as Bolton have been hit hardest by the deep cuts to local government spending. The idea that the Government sometimes project—that austerity hits everyone equally—is nonsense. The cuts are nothing less than politically motivated. The heaviest have been in the most deprived regions that are often thought of as economically left behind. That is compounded by the fact that those areas have the highest levels of poverty and a lower capacity to mitigate cuts through local taxation or asset sales.

My local council, Bolton, has lost about £1 billion in spending power since austerity began in 2010. That has impacted on social care, with adult and child services taking the biggest hit, despite being the areas with the highest demand. As many hon. Members have said, we have an ageing population and therefore the impact on the social care budget is getting bigger. More and more children are being taken into care, meaning that the amount of money required is increasing.

Colleagues have mentioned the pressures on local authorities. For example, over the past three years, Bolton Council's adult services department had to find more than £10 million of savings, including £8.8 million from children's services. My local authority had to raise council tax, specifically to pay for social care. That led to its critics saying, "Oh, the council is raising taxes", but nobody spoke about the fact that it had no choice. With funding cuts of 50%, what was it to do other than raise local taxation to fill that gap? The Institute for Fiscal Studies has estimated that between 2010 and 2020 local government will have had its direct funding cut by 79%. Let that sink in: 79%!

Faisal Rashid: While the Prime Minister was announcing the end of austerity last October, more than 5,000 councillors signed the "Breaking Point" petition to call on the Government to cancel their planned cuts for the new year and immediately to invest £2 billion in children and adult services. Does—

Mrs Anne Main (in the Chair): Order. Interventions must be brief. That was a mini-speech, and the hon. Gentleman has been here for only half the debate. I want to give the hon. Member for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi) time to continue with her speech. I am sure she has the gist of what he had to say.

Yasmin Qureshi: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention, and I entirely agree with what he said. We have seen our youth centres, museums and libraries close, and a social care system in crisis, and that is due to the Government's ambition to reduce the public sector.

Most of what Bolton Council has done has been to provide the best for the people who live there. Successive council leaders and cabinet members have considered the benefits of their discretionary services, and the impact of cutting them, and looked at how to run things differently internally without affecting frontline services and staff. For example, when a member of the local authority leaves, they are not replaced, which means that the burden of the work falls on fewer people. Such savings help the council to fulfil its obligations.

Bolton Council is good in that it is still finding ways to invest in the borough beyond the statutory requirements. It has innovated in the face of austerity through capital

investment projects such as improving access for disabled people, investing in leisure facilities, and putting millions into community and environmental projects. It has been working with businesses, and its latest capital strategy involves spending £212 million on various projects across the borough. Some of that will go towards the town centre masterplan, but other investments include school expansions, fixing roads, and improving the township generally.

The council has stimulated the market, and it is sharing that success with extra investment in our schools, and in the area, so that the lives of those who live in Bolton can be improved. Bolton Council has the lowest priced school meals in the entire United Kingdom, and we still offer free breakfasts in schools where they are needed. We are the first council in the country to open a new children's centre, while Tory-run administrations continue to cut such services. The bottom line, however, is that 10 years of austerity and three years of focusing on Brexit has left local government on the ropes. Councils are facing a funding black hole of more than £5 billion by the end of the decade, and it is still unclear how they will be funded beyond 2020.

It is upsetting and nauseating when Conservative politicians in Bolton, who know that the council has had to make cuts because its grants have reduced by 50%, dishonestly blame the Labour council for not providing the things that people want—for example, filling potholes. If the choice is between giving money to an elderly vulnerable person or filling a pothole, we know what the council has to do. People are being disingenuous when they jump on such issues, as has happened in Bolton where Conservative politicians go on about potholes, even though they know where the problem lies.

The independent parties are no better either, as they deliberately mislead people about why certain things are not happening in our town. For example, in Farnworth, which is one of the deprived areas, our local authority has been involved for a number of years in a project to renovate the town centre, but on two occasions the private companies pulled out. The council has now taken on that work, but the opposition parties use that as a mechanism to say, "The local authority is not doing anything", which is misleading. That annoys people, and they can sense that we are angry about this. There is misrepresentation by independent political parties as well as by the main opposition party in Bolton.

Bolton Council has been doing a fantastic job with limited money, and we ask the Government to think seriously about how funding should be allocated. Removing deprivation from the factors that influence funding is completely unacceptable, as that should be one of the main criteria used when considering local authority funding for a particular area. Until and unless funding is properly resolved, those problems will continue, and councils and people who live in certain towns—especially in the north—will suffer.

3.37 pm

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve with you in the Chair, Mrs Main, and to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi), who made a positive case for what the Labour council is trying to achieve in such

constrained times. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing this debate at a crucial time for our local authorities. By the end of the next financial year, my constituents across York will have experienced an £189 cut per household, which has had a significant impact on families. I often say to colleagues that in York they need to look beyond the walls and travel into the communities to see the real deprivation in our city. York itself is the most inequitable city outside London, and it experiences severe deprivation.

It is important to consider deprivation when creating a so-called fair funding formula. York has the worst-funded schools in the country, and one of the worst-funded health authorities. Crime is rocketing by 13%, which is 5% above the national average, yet 60 police staff have been cut. Those cuts are having a cumulative impact on our city, and the need to fall back on the local authority is escalating. As a result we must consider what is happening with different funding formulas and that cumulative impact, not least because of the many partnerships that existed, which is where the real work is done to address issues of crime and public health. Resilience is breaking down in our cities, and we must ensure that funding works across the board.

The cuts have impacted on social care in our city, which is under particular strain because hospitals cannot discharge patients, the support is not there, and there is a knock-on impact on other services. York has a particular reputation for delayed discharge, and it is not a good one.

There are also pressures on social care. We cannot recruit the social care workforce—people cannot afford to live in our city because the housing is so expensive and the wages so low. I urge the Minister to take a more holistic view of his brief and to work cross-departmentally when looking at the funding formula, because of that impact.

I am also concerned about future dependence on business rates. We have debated those rates many a time in this House, and they have a negative impact on the retail outlets in York, as well as other businesses, because we have a false market. What has happened is much like the sub-prime market that existed ahead of the last crash. Many offshore landlords have invested in York, hiking up the prices, the values and the rentals of their properties. As a result, they are more interested in their investment in the longer term, rather than in the high street, so 50 units in the city are empty. Sadly, our Tory-Lib Dem city council just puts stickers in the windows of high street outlets, as opposed to trying to get businesses in. Increasing business rates therefore have an impact, because businesses leave and the revenue does not come to the council. There is a negative cycle. I will be interested to hear the Minister's comments, and it is certainly something that I have discussed with Treasury Ministers at length.

The precept is also a regressive tax on social care. It is important for us to look at more progressive, fairer and more proportionate forms of taxation, as opposed to some of the measures put in place instead. Again, with issues such as the precept, areas of deprivation will clearly not generate the same levels of money and resource for social care as more affluent areas. We therefore see greater inequality yet again. Even within York we have serious inequality. In fact, between the most and least affluent areas of York is an eight-year gap in life expectancy,

[*Rachael Maskell*]

which demonstrates not only economic inequality but its impact on health and other social determinants of health.

We therefore need the local authority to be properly resourced. Sadly, the Tory-Lib Dem failure in our city has meant that resources have not gone into the right places to address inequality. The council has been quite profligate in how it has used limited and restrained resources without bringing real benefit to our city, so I am absolutely delighted that Labour has put a well-costed programme together.

“Getting York back on track” is our manifesto for York to move forward. It looks at how to bring investment into our city and to ensure that we build a more sustainable and long-term approach to delivering services, putting in vital resources and growing the economy by attracting businesses. We are a low-wage economy so it is vital to have investment for good-quality jobs in the future. Socially, we also want to address the very issues of my constituents’ constant need, such as investing in our city centre by putting in a family quarter, or ensuring that we have higher environmental credentials in our city, which should be something that all local authorities are mandated to have.

We want to be carbon neutral by 2030. A pressing agenda throughout the country is to have carbon budgets, and we want water provided on our streets, so that people are not buying plastic bottles. Such investments are made for the long term of our planet as well as of cities. We are talking about funding, so I will be interested in what focus the Minister has on improving the environmental credentials of local authorities and their contribution to that agenda.

I will leave it there. I can say so much more about what Labour wants to do when we come to power in May, but the Minister already has much to respond to today.

3.44 pm

Mr Paul Sweeney (Glasgow North East) (Lab/Co-op): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing this debate at a critical time for our public finances.

I speak as a Member of Parliament for the great city of Glasgow, which has a fine tradition of what might be called municipal socialism. It would be great to rediscover that municipal route to socialism, but it has been under assault for many years now, with a decade-long programme of austerity cuts, if not more, the brunt of which has been borne by local government. We often hear from Scottish National party Members in this place about how wonderful everything is in Scotland, and how munificent the Scottish Government are in stewarding local government by dispensing the fruits of excellent governance in Edinburgh to the rest of Scotland. That could not be further from the truth.

Look at the dire straits in which Glasgow City Council finds itself. Last year, Glasgow had to find £49.9 million-worth of cuts, almost £20 million of them a direct consequence of the Scottish Government’s cuts to local government. The remainder are due to pay and other inflationary pressures. The real brunt of cuts made by central Government in Westminster and at Holyrood is borne by councils, and, as a result, Scotland has lost

30,000 council jobs in recent years. That is a shameful indictment of those who are responsible. The mass unemployment that we railed against during Thatcherite deindustrialisation in the 1980s has been writ large in local government by a Scottish nationalist Administration in Edinburgh.

Between 2010 and 2018, Glasgow lost £233 per head of population in Scottish Government funding. That is a real-terms cut; it is the cost of the Scottish National party to every single Glaswegian. In May 2017, a minority SNP administration took over Glasgow City Council. However, instead of robust opposition to the onslaught of cuts, we have seen not only meek acceptance by the council, but even an attempt to divert attention and to deny the reality of the fiscal constraints on Glasgow—Scotland’s largest city, and a city with some of the greatest social problems in the country.

In my constituency, the failure in the quality of local services—a reduction in cleansing services, poor repair of roads, failure to help homeless people to move into temporary accommodation, and a decline in care and social work services—has had a creeping effect on some of the weakest people in our society, who disproportionately rely on such services. That has happened at a time when the SNP has celebrated imposing a council tax freeze on local government.

Ged Killen (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (Lab/Co-op): On the council tax freeze, does my hon. Friend agree that if local councils are to be accountable to the people who elect them, it is essential to protect the autonomy of local government to raise its own funds, rather than giving councillors the choice between making worse cuts and even worse cuts?

Mr Sweeney: I thank my hon. Friend for making that pertinent point, which goes to the heart of the issue of local government—structural decay over decades. Once, we had great, autonomous and highly vigorous municipal authorities. Look at Glasgow, which used to run its own gas and electricity provision, tramways, railway system and subway system. The Glasgow Corporation was a huge enterprise, and it has been slowly but surely torn apart over the past 50 years by creeping centralisation. That has happened at a regional level, and it is now happening with the dismantling of Scottish regional councils and regional authorities and their centralisation into Holyrood.

An inadvertent and regrettable effect of devolution over the past 20 years has, in essence, been to displace the municipal power of Glasgow and the west of Scotland, and to suck it into the east and into Edinburgh. We should guard against that in the constitutional reform of city regions across the United Kingdom. We need to consider what effect such devolution might have on the margins and the periphery of that power base. I would like that to be corrected in Scotland as we look forward to the next two decades of devolution.

Faisal Rashid: I will be brief this time, Mrs Main. Because of funding cuts, councils across the country are being forced to sell their assets in order to fund the revenue budget. Does my hon. Friend agree that that is not the way to fund services?

Mr Sweeney: I absolutely agree. Glasgow is in the absurd situation of having what must be the only car parking company in the world to lose money every year. There is not much of an overhead in running a car parking service, but as a result of the constraints on funding, and particularly the effort to resolve disputes and long-standing historical issues of equal pay in local authorities—that is a national issue, but the council has received no national support to deal with it—the mechanism that was devised was essentially to sell its assets to arm's length companies. It mortgaged those assets but because of the credit crunch, a lot of them fell into negative equity. Councils are paying off huge bills—to Barclays bank, in the case of Glasgow—to service the financial constraints that have been imposed upon them.

We have to look at the reality of council financing, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Ged Killen) mentioned. More than 80% of funding for councils in Scotland is derived from central Government grants. Councils do not raise their own money—very marginal yields are achieved from council tax and business rates. In Scotland, the bulk of it is controlled centrally. With the council tax freeze, the SNP removed councils' capacity to raise council tax. The SNP has massively cut the budgets available to local authorities, and that will hammer their capacity to provide services and will push councils into destructive decisions such as selling off and mortgaging assets, creating a vicious cycle of decay and decline.

According to the Scottish Parliament's information centre, the local government revenue budget in Glasgow was cut by 6.9% from 2013 to 2018, whereas the Scottish Government's own revenue budget fell by just 1.6% over the same period. As opposed to the Scottish average of 6.9%, Glasgow's budget has been cut by 12.8%—an even greater cut to the local authority that is in the greatest need in Scotland. That reduction is twice the average cut to Scotland's 32 councils, and a further 3.6% cut for Glasgow is planned for this year.

There is no question but that the Tories are to blame for handing the Government in Edinburgh a cut of 1.6%. However, to multiply that percentage by four to make a 6.9% cut, and to multiply it by seven in Glasgow, is a deep injustice that flies in the face of any semblance of social justice or economic redistribution. It makes a mockery of the Scottish National party's tendency to come to this place and profess to be custodians of Labour's soul and of real socialist values. I find that absurd, because it is not the reality in the streets, towns and cities of Scotland under the SNP's Administration since 2007. That is the stark reality.

The only conclusion we can draw is that local government in Glasgow in particular has been targeted disproportionately for cuts, in large part because for many years Glasgow was under Labour administration, so it was easy enough to pass the buck and blame a Labour council for having to administer the harsh choices. In many cases, we were too keen to be the managers of that decline rather than resisting it robustly.

We need to offer an apology to the women in Glasgow who suffered as a result of the failure properly to settle the equal pay dispute in Glasgow, and who have continued to be militant about it. A Court of Session ruling has declared that they are due more than half a billion pounds as a result of historical pay injustice. That is the reality of what happened, but it is not necessarily the

fault or the design of councillors trying to do women out of a settlement. They administered and dealt with the problem badly, but the root cause lies in the destruction of local councils' capacity to raise their own money, deliver their own services and be masters of their own destiny. That is the brutal reality.

On behalf of the Labour party, I offer a profound apology to women in Glasgow for what they have faced over the last 10 years. Many women died waiting for the settlement. But it was a sin of omission, not of commission; we failed properly to challenge the decline in council services and budgets. In many ways, we tried to resolve the equal pay dispute by selling assets, but we have to recognise that the system and pay structure were flawed. The root cause of the problem was our national failure to get a grip on local government reform. That was a great flaw of devolution over the last 20 years, certainly in Scotland.

I hope that as we look forward to the next two decades of devolution, we can right some of those injustices and properly re-establish decent municipal services in councils and city regions across Scotland. The story of devolution does not end with Edinburgh or Holyrood; it has to continue into the great towns and cities of Scotland and develop for a successful future.

3.53 pm

Jim McMahon (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Main. I declare an interest as a vice-president of the Local Government Association. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) for securing an interesting debate. I would say that the debate had been inspiring, but it has not; it has been quite depressing to hear about the human consequences and the community cost of austerity.

We were told that austerity was over, and that there would be a reset—a bright new tomorrow. That has proven to be a lie. When the Chancellor was called to open his cheque book, no money came to local government. That is because there has been a determined attempt not just to take the money away, but to completely reshape how local public services are funded. For someone who lives in a wealthy area where property prices are high and the business rate base is strong, that is great, because it will be possible to fund reasonable public services. I am afraid, however, that people who live in areas with historically low house prices and business rate bases will be denied basic public services—the civic infrastructure that makes a country a decent place to live.

Those may be the 1.2 million older people who would have had care in 2010 but no longer receive it today. They may be the children who are denied a good start in life because of cuts to Sure Start centres or the youth service in their area. They may just be people who live in areas where crime has gone through the roof, not simply because our police service has been cut, although it has, but because support has been completely taken away. Crime reduction budgets in England have been cut by 61%, safety services by 76% and CCTV by 35%. Hundreds of youth centres have been closed, and the Government scratch their head and wonder why knife crime has gone through the roof. They wonder why probation is falling over, even though money has been taken away and the failed privatisation model let so many people down.

[Jim McMahon]

It is about more than just funding, although that is important; it is about a Government who want to wash their hands of local public services and local communities. That is shameful for a number of reasons, not least because of the cries for a new settlement during the EU referendum. Not many people were talking about the European Union as a political entity. People were saying, "I am fed up with this being my lot. I am fed up with looking at my community and seeing all the times that things are taken away. I am fed up with having to look backwards to yesterday, when there were decent jobs. For my children and grandchildren, even more than for me, I am more fearful for the future than ever before."

When the Government had the opportunity to reinvest into local public services, they did the opposite—they turned their back on the very communities that needed that investment and support. It is criminal to allow that responsibility to fall by the wayside. We cannot continue to have an £8 billion public service deficit for local councils. It will be on this Minister's watch that an older person dies because they did not get the care that they needed in their own home. It will be on this Minister's watch that a child is neglected because there is no funding for children's services to support them. It will be on this Minister's watch that someone dies in a doorway because money is not going to support homelessness in our communities. No Minister wants that to be their record. Who comes into this place to make the country worse, rather than better?

There is an opportunity, because we know that the Treasury is sitting on many billions of pounds of tax surplus. Something like £14 billion was collected at the end of January, over and above what was spent on public services. There is money in the system, but it is being stubbornly held back rather than being released to fund public good.

I will finish on this point: if the Government want to build a better Britain, they have to base it on a strong local public service foundation. If we do not do so, when we look to our communities and councils to start to rebuild, they will simply say, "We haven't got the resources or the capacity to do that." We will miss an opportunity for another generation. No more excuses, no more rehearsing the financial crash and no more pulling out the old top lines from Tory HQ. Today is the day for answers.

3.58 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Rishi Sunak): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Main. I congratulate the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Thelma Walker) on securing this debate. I join her in paying tribute to all those working in local government up and down the country, including her husband, for the terrific work they do to make our communities better places to live.

It may surprise hon. Members to hear that I agree with much of what has been said. First, the sheer range of things we have heard illustrates the importance of what local government does and the impact on all our residents' and constituents' lives. I also agree that local government has been dealing with a very difficult financial climate these past few years, for reasons we do not need to rehash in the short time we have. This Government took the right decision—the moral decision—to get our

public finances back in order, and local government has played a very important role in making that happen. It deserves enormous credit for the way it has done that—for finding better, cheaper ways to do things while maintaining high resident satisfaction—but I appreciate that that journey is closer to its end than its beginning.

One thing we may disagree on, though, is the talk of cuts. We heard a lot about cuts and a lot of selective quoting of statistics. The simple truth is that the resources available to local government to spend on core services will be £1 billion higher this financial year than last financial year. That represents almost a 3% rise in the cash available to local authorities up and down the country.

Alex Cunningham: The Minister says there will be £1 billion more to spend this financial year, but how many billions have been cut since 2010?

Rishi Sunak: I acknowledged right at the beginning of my speech the difficult financial climate that local government has suffered over the last few years. I am not trying to pretend it has not—I acknowledge that. The point is that the Government are absolutely listening and responding. A billion pounds more is almost a 3% rise in funding. That is more than the economy is growing by, and it is more than inflation.

[SIR CHRISTOPHER CHOPE *in the Chair*]

Jim McMahon: The Minister is correct that councils have £1 billion more to spend on public services today than they did this time last year, but that is because of the pressure that has been applied to council tax payers. People are paying more and more council tax for less and less in the way of public services. By the way, the data shows that, in England, there have been cuts of £4.5 billion to neighbourhood services and £3.5 billion in real terms to transport services. That is the cost in the community—the £1 billion goes nowhere near covering that. Surely he knows that.

Rishi Sunak: It is nice that we are now talking about whether the increase in funding is enough. I am glad we have moved the debate on. It is also good to hear Labour Members talking about the importance of council tax. We believe in keeping people's council tax bills down. They will be 6% lower in real terms this year than they were when this Government came into office, and they have risen slower than under the last Labour Government, when they increased at an annual rate of almost 6%. This Government are committed to keeping council tax bills low, and it is important that we are mindful of that.

Many points were made, and I want to try to address as many as I can in the time available. I would like to do so through the framework with which I look at local government, given the sheer range of things it does. Local councils do three important things: support the most vulnerable in our society, drive economic growth in their areas and build strong communities. I believe very much that this Government are backing them in doing all three of those vital tasks.

First, as we heard, local government helps the most vulnerable in our society. Local authorities are the first to reach out those who fall on hard times, and I am delighted that our recent settlement provides them with increased funding to do exactly that. Councils have told this Government that the most acute pressure they face

is in adult and children's social care, so in the recent settlement and Budget, the Government responded with an additional £650 million for adult and children's social care this year. That includes £240 million to ease winter pressures and the flexibility to split the remainder between adult and children's services as local preferences dictate.

We also champion authorities that put innovation at the heart of service delivery. We heard a lot about money, but the outcomes that that money delivers are just as important. We should be focused not just on what goes in but on what comes out. The Government will focus relentlessly on ensuring that taxpayers' hard-earned money is well spent.

On children's care, about which we heard a lot, a recent National Audit Office report noted the enormous variation in performance and cost among local authorities. That is nothing to do with the political colour of those authorities; it is just down to differences in leadership and management practice. That is why it is important that the Government are backing practices in Leeds, Hertfordshire and North Yorkshire with an £84 million fund, and taking their models, which deliver higher-quality outcomes at lower cost, across the country.

The hon. Members for Colne Valley and for Stockton North (Alex Cunningham)—and indeed the hon. Member for Croydon North (Mr Reed), who is no longer in his place—rightly mentioned the importance of early intervention, in which I strongly believe. I have been a relentless champion of the troubled families programme since I have had this job. He is not here anymore, but the hon. Member for Croydon North will have seen the Secretary of State make a very significant speech last week about the progress of that programme and how it is transforming children's lives on the ground, getting people into work and keeping people out of the criminal justice system.

Knife crime is also important. That is why a £10 million extension was recently made to the troubled families programme, specifically to support families against youth crime. That funding is now benefiting 21 areas that bid into the programme to tackle that vital issue. The hon. Gentleman talked about funding running out. That is because we are at the end of a spending review period. Of course, in the spending review, I and the Government will be battling very hard for a successor programme to the troubled families programme. The Secretary of State committed to that last week, and I wholeheartedly support it.

I am also passionate about technology, which has the potential to be transformative. I recently launched an innovation fund to help councils embrace the digital revolution. Technology helps deliver services better on the ground and find ways to save money. Together with the LGA, we are developing a tool to help councils to benchmark, analyse and drive their performance. I believe there are considerable opportunities across local government to improve lives, save money and transform services, and we will pursue them all relentlessly.

The second thing local authorities do is drive economic growth, ensuring that every part of our country can prosper. Ultimately, that is the only sustainable way to fund the public services that we have heard so much about and we all care passionately about, and it is the only way to improve living standards in our communities. There may well be fundamentally different points of view on that. The Government believe that, rather than

being funded by central Government handouts, local authorities should be empowered and rewarded for their entrepreneurship. Indeed, even Labour Members expressed different points of view about the degree of autonomy local government should have to raise its own money and about over-reliance on things such as business rates—the single largest way for local areas around the world to raise income. It is all very well saying we want more local autonomy, but we must understand what that means in practice.

Our business rates retention scheme does exactly that, putting power in the hands of local authorities to reap the benefits of their hard work. This year, on top of the £46 billion I mentioned, local authorities will retain an additional £2.4 billion of business rates growth. The 15 new business rates retention pilots across the nation, from Northumberland to Southampton, demonstrate this Government's commitment to backing councils' ambitions for their local economies.

Rachael Maskell: Will the Minister also acknowledge the challenges that business rates create? What will the Government do to address those?

Rishi Sunak: I am happy to do that. I am glad that York and Kirklees—the areas represented by the hon. Lady and the hon. Member for Colne Valley—joined my local area to be part of one of those business rates pilots. That will generate an extra £34 million, which our councils have worked together to decide how to deploy in our area. That is central Government backing our area's ambitions. The hon. Member for York Central (Rachael Maskell) is right to mention business rates. The change in retail shopping habits is a pressing issue. There is a range of measures, from small business rates relief to rural rates relief and the new retail relief, giving retailers a foot—

Thelma Walker: Will the Minister give way?

Rishi Sunak: Yes.

Thelma Walker: I hear what the Minister is saying, but the reality is that high streets are emptying. Companies such as Marks and Spencer are pulling out of the centre of Huddersfield in Kirklees. Well-known names are pulling out of our high streets. What is the answer to that?

Rishi Sunak: Again, I am happy to say that it is not my job or the Government's job to dictate to people how they should shop. Part of what is changing habits is part of why people are changing how they shop. It is not the Government's role to dictate to them.

Thelma Walker: Will the Minister give way?

Rishi Sunak: No, I will finish my point. Where the Government do have a role to play is in ensuring that the tax system is in line with modern practice. When it comes to business rates retail relief, which gives retailers a third off their business rates bill for the next two years, is the latest in a long line of measures that mean there will be £13 billion of business rates reductions by the end of this Parliament. That means a third of all businesses will pay no business rates.

Jim McMahon: That is a fair point, but the Minister will recognise that that is nowhere near enough. Because of the threshold that is in place, a local Marks and Spencer would not benefit from the type of relief that is

[*Jim McMahon*]

being offered. He must accept that, unless we deal with international taxation and business taxation in the round rather than just having business rates coupled to local government spending, it will never be fair, and we will still be in a situation in which a cleaner or a server in Starbucks pays more tax than Starbucks itself. How can that be sustainable?

Rishi Sunak: The idea that this Government are not doing that is an old chestnut. This Government have brought forward more ways to clamp down on international tax than any previous Government and £14 billion extra has been collected. This Government put in place the first diverted profits tax and at the last Budget announced a digital services tax, which we will put in place in line with international peers.

Jim McMahon: Will the hon. Member give way?

Rishi Sunak: I am conscious of time, so I will make progress. If those peers do not act, then we will act unilaterally. The Government are addressing the point.

I agree with the hon. Member for York Central that high streets are important. That was also mentioned by the hon. Member for Stockton North, who talked about his high street, which I know as it is near my constituency. This Government understand the importance of high streets in creating living, breathing communities. That is why a £675 million high streets transformation fund was announced at the last Budget for all local authorities. I encourage Members to talk to their local authorities and bid for the fund. It is there to fund transformational projects that revitalise high streets and comes on top of the Treasury business rate reductions. The Government are agreeing with and backing local authorities to ensure that high streets remain the beating, vibrant hearts of communities. We are in agreement and there is financial support, through tax reductions and this fund, to support high streets. However, shopping habits are changing and retailers, high streets and planning authorities have to adapt. Business rates are only one part of the answer.

The last thing to touch on is building strong communities. We have talked about high streets and other points. Ultimately, local authorities are making people more proud of the places where they live, partly by building houses that people want to call home, whether through the new home bonus or through the lifting of the housing revenue account borrowing cap. Again, the Government are responding to what local government has asked for and delivering it for them.

Alex Cunningham: The Minister is talking about devolution and the responsibility of others. The Mayor of Tees Valley has just spent up to £90 million on a loss-making airport. Does the Minister agree that that money would have been better invested in transport infrastructure that encourages investment and creates real jobs? The airport has not created any new jobs or new flights.

Rishi Sunak: I think the Mayor of the Tees Valley, Ben Houchen, is doing a fantastic job of ensuring that the voice of Tees Valley is heard in this place. There has been considerable investment in developing the steelworks, the development zone and tax reliefs, which has been widely welcomed. I know that because my constituents are excited to see the rebirth of Durham Tees Valley airport.

I know the airport well and I am delighted that it will now have a bright future under the stewardship of the Conservative Mayor of the Tees Valley.

We heard from the hon. Members for Poplar and Limehouse (Jim Fitzpatrick), for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi) and for York Central about Government funding formulas. There is lots to say about that, but the question was raised about why homelessness is not included in the formula. The simple reason is that the amount of homelessness funding that goes through the local government finance settlement is a very small percentage of the total amount—from memory it is only £175 million. The remainder of the homelessness funding, which is several hundred million pounds, has a dedicated formula specific to it. Obviously, if that changed and a future decision was taken to roll that homelessness money into the overall local government settlement, it would demand a formula of its own. I am happy to give that reassurance.

Deprivation is in the formula and in all the areas where it makes a significant difference. Deprivation has little to do with the cost of maintaining a road or a flood defence, for example, and therefore it is not factored into those areas. Of course, it is factored into all the areas that we heard about, including adult social care and children's social care. In answer to the hon. Member for York Central, we are working in conjunction with all those Departments to develop formulas that they are happy with.

In conclusion, we believe in local government. As we look forward to the spending review, I and the Department will be making a strong case that local government is funded properly, to do all the things it does today, as well as those it will do tomorrow. Beyond money, we will ensure local government has the power, the flexibilities and the devolution that we heard about from the hon. Member for Barnsley Central (Dan Jarvis). Indeed, the Government are supporting that devolution with a considerable amount of money. That is the future for local government that central Government are backing. I will continue to listen to local government, learn from it and push its case in this Government.

4.14 pm

Thelma Walker: Thank you for chairing this part of the debate, Sir Christopher. I thank my hon. Friends for their passionate speeches, in which their compassion for their communities really came through. I thank the Minister for his response. What came through to me is a lack of caring from him. I just heard words, but I do not feel compassion. I am sorry. The fact that there has not been one Conservative Member here to stand up and speak in support of the Government's cuts to local government speaks for itself.

Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con): Will the hon. Member give way?

Thelma Walker: No, it is too late. The hon. Gentleman was not part of the debate. The reality, as expressed so compassionately by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham West and Royton (Jim McMahon), is that communities are hurting: we have food banks; we have children with special needs waiting for appropriate support; and we have homelessness. That is the reality. I hear words but I do not hear compassion and care.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved.

That this House has considered local government funding.

Amazon and SMEs

4.15 pm

Sir Christopher Chope (in the Chair): I call Kevin Barron to move the motion.

Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab): I beg to move,

That this House has considered Amazon and the treatment of SMEs.

It is Kevin Brennan, actually, Mr Chope. I was once briefly knighted in the *Mail Online* by a journalist making exactly the same mistake, but I always consider myself more shovelry than chivalry.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the debate today about Amazon. I will tell a story about my constituent, Roland Brana, who this year should have been celebrating 20 years of his successful and growing family business, selling motorcycle protective clothing. He spent 11 years as a sole trader, then eight years as a limited company, and in each year he achieved continued growth. It was a successful, viable business with quality products that were competitively priced and in demand.

In 1999 his business, Bikers Gear, began importing self-designed own brand motorcycle clothing from a factory in Pakistan and sold it online via his own website and on eBay. In 2001 he opened a high street shop in Barry, south Wales, and in 2002 he accepted an invitation from Amazon to become a merchant on its newly launched non-video and book UK marketplace. His business continued to flourish. In March 2010, Bikers Gear UK was incorporated as a limited company and in 2013 the brand launched across Europe via Amazon's European platforms.

In 2013 Bikers Gear registered for VAT in both Germany and France, and in 2014 a German and French speaking customer service team was launched, based in Leipzig. In 2015 Mr Brana completed EU-wide registration of the Bikers Gear trademark logo. This should be the story of a lad from a council estate and a single-parent family who made good. Instead, it is the story of a small businessman who finds himself having to start all over again, having had to close his business, because of the way that his small company, Bikers Gear UK, was treated by the global conglomerate Amazon.

The real problems started when Amazon approached Mr Brana in May 2016 for a retail manufacturer partnership. He accepted that as an opportunity for the business to go to the next stage. He would concentrate on expanding the manufacturing of the product and Amazon would concentrate on selling. Amazon forecast great potential for growth. He was aware that one of his manufacturers in Pakistan had a family relative trading in Australia, who sold similar motorcycle garments, so in 2010 he created an image user agreement to protect his online images from any potential infringement by this Australian brand.

Following the agreement, during 2017 Mr Brana began to receive offers of orders for more than €1 million from Amazon. To begin with he could not accept many of the orders because of delivery windows and not holding enough stock in south Wales. The problem lay with his main supplier in Pakistan, which was refusing many large purchase orders. He took action to drop this supplier. Because of this and complaints from Amazon regarding poor order acceptance rates, Mr Brana travelled

to Luxembourg twice in 2017 and met Amazon buyers. Mr Brana reassured them that he would increase the stock in the south Wales warehouse to improve the order acceptance rate for 2018. He explained to Amazon buyers that the low acceptance rate was due to the problem at one particular factory, and explained that, to resolve the supply issue in 2018, he planned to introduce another supplier. He informed them that he would personally be investing £75,000 to increase his holding stock as he was fully committed to the Bikers Gear UK business, and that he would do so by re-mortgaging his home.

In 2018, Mr Brana approached Barclays Bank, obtained the mortgage and, as promised, began increasing the stock in his south Wales warehouse. All should have been well but, at the same time, he noticed that the Amazon order had by now almost stopped. He started investigating and noticed that the Australian brand had started selling its brand on the Amazon UK platform. At that point, it appeared to be offering different garments from the Bikers Gear UK garments and not selling products with his barcode or European article number—now known as the international article number—that delineated the product on websites. With the exception of the new 2018 range, however, no orders were being received from Amazon by Bikers Gear UK. Even its best-selling garments were not being ordered.

Mr Brana presumed that Amazon holding stock would run out and he would be able to return to selling the garments successfully, as he did prior to the 2016 Amazon agreement. He started checking the website stock level, which is clearly visible when someone makes a purchase on the Amazon website. It would state things such as, "Four left in stock—more on the way." He checked back days later, and the stock available had gone up on his product from four to 18. It was clear that, even though Amazon had not purchased any new stock, its inventory was going up, not down. Something was clearly wrong.

Alex Sobel (Leeds North West) (Lab/Co-op): The experience of my hon. Friend's constituent is not uncommon. Many people who allowed Amazon to take the business end away found that Amazon started to sell on their behalf and their business was squeezed. In Germany, a company called Cancom said:

"To team up with Amazon is like to team up with the devil. We team up with Amazon but not in a transactional area."

This is a common business practice of Amazon's.

Kevin Brennan: I can only say that I know my constituent would entirely endorse the view of that German company given his personal experience. As I outline the rest of the story of what happened, I think it will become clear why.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I am aware that SMEs make some £2.3 billion in sales through Amazon, so there is potential for small and medium-sized enterprises to do well. Is the hon. Gentleman advocating regulation through the Minister's Department and through Government to ensure that both companies that use Amazon and Amazon itself can benefit from the sales? I think it is important to do so.

Kevin Brennan: We all understand the importance of online sales to small and medium-sized enterprises, and the huge opportunity that this kind of tech platform

[Kevin Brennan]

has given small businesses. That is to be welcomed, but with that comes a responsibility on tech platforms wielding huge market power to treat small businesses fairly and in an ethical fashion, and I am afraid that that is not what has happened in this case or, as we have heard, in other cases.

As I described earlier, the stock on the website was going up, even though Amazon was not ordering any new stock from my constituent. Something was clearly wrong. He contacted his account manager, who refused to help other than by passing him a link on the Amazon website to report any infringement. He contacted intellectual property lawyers, who advised him to test purchase his own brand listings on the Amazon website. The test purchases, which were advertised as his brand, proved when they turned up to be the Australian brand.

Astonishingly, and in my view dishonestly, Amazon were using his Bikers Gear UK brand to pass off another different brand supplied by the Pakistani factory he had previously ceased trading with. The factory was using Bikers Gear UK garment patterns. He could not establish any line of contact, and by now his Amazon account manager was bouncing back his messages with the message, "mail box unable to receive your mail".

In effect, Amazon had pilfered all Mr Brana's data, his brand name, his product reviews, his barcodes and his customer base. He had lost 75% of work for the past eight months and he would have to liquidate the business before he fell into heavy debt. With September approaching and the bike season closing, he would be in danger of running up debts with good people with whom he had been trading for the past 18 years. As a result, Mr Brana lost his family business and his family lost their jobs in that business.

How could that happen? When Bikers Gear made a commercial decision to end the relationship with its main supplier in Pakistan and move production to a new, modern factory, those suppliers contacted Amazon's buying team in Luxembourg, requesting to supply Biker Gear UK's garments direct to them. Mr Brana has seen email evidence from Amazon showing that the Pakistani supplier had made contact with Amazon in Luxembourg. The content of that email was that their factory could supply the garments to Amazon directly. The factory had obtained important Amazon contact email addresses when Mr Brana had failed to remove Amazon's email contact details from a forwarded message to the factory earlier that year.

In January 2018, Amazon started taking supply from the Pakistani supplier. There was a very slight change to the logo on the garments it supplied to Amazon, but in essence they were Mr Brana's designs. It was as if someone reversed the tick on Nike trainers, which I am sure you are aware of, Sir Christopher, and then passed them off to the public as an original pair of Nikes. Amazon was by now passing off the non-registered garments to Mr Brana's European customers, using all his data information.

Within eight months the Bikers Gear company was in financial difficulty and unable to continue its legal action against Amazon. In August 2018, this law-abiding, taxpaying company went into liquidation. Seven people based in the UK lost their jobs, five full time and two part time. The five full-time workers claimed redundancy

money from the Government totalling between £25,000 and £30,000. Bikers Gear UK, in its last full financial year's trading from April 2016 to April 2017, had a turnover of more than £1 million and the company paid taxes and duties approaching £150,000 across the European Union. Today, Amazon continues to pass off those garments to the public.

The Bikers Gear UK business grew organically year on year by reinvesting profits into the company and growing the Bikers Gear catalogue. Ironically, in January of this year, Roland and his company were invited by Lord Eric Pickles to take part in the 2019 Parliamentary Review, originally set up by David Cameron and co-chaired by David Blunkett, to share knowledge and good practice and to raise industry standards. Under the circumstances, Mr Brana felt unable to take up that invitation.

This is a cautionary tale for small businesses: a successful small business sells via Amazon, and Amazon offers a partnership to expand the cake and to take a slice, instead of which it effectively takes the whole cake. Mr Brana now deeply regrets having gone into partnership with Amazon. Far from helping his small business to grow, Amazon effectively cloned his business and starved the original. Amazon is too big for Mr Brana to take on. He is now having to start all over again with his new brand, Black Tab Motorcycle Clothing, and a small retail shop, again in Barry, south Wales. I say to the Minister that that is the type of predatory capitalism being practised by some big tech businesses that the Government need to be aware of and act on, and I ask the Minister what the Government are doing to protect small businesses and people such as my constituent, Roland Brana, from being drowned in the vast waters of Amazon and other institutions of the new high-tech plutocracy.

4.29 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Christopher. I congratulate the hon. Member for Cardiff West (Kevin Brennan) on securing this important debate and thank him for bringing this issue to Westminster Hall. That has enabled him to highlight the particular case of his constituent and it gives me the opportunity to respond. This subject is of personal interest to me. I am the Minister responsible for small business but, before coming to this place, I ran my own business and dealt with big organisations, so I am not unfamiliar with particular challenges that exist in the wider market and not just in regard to the sectors and platforms to which he referred.

In 2018, 5.7 million UK businesses were SMEs. That represents 99.9% of UK business, 60% of total UK private sector employment and 52% of turnover. People should be in no doubt that this Government, this Department and I understand that SMEs are the backbone of our economy. That is why it is of particular concern to me to hear about the experiences of the hon. Gentleman's constituent as the SME seller Bikers Gear UK on Amazon. I can only imagine what a difficult experience that must have been for him and his family.

No company should be able to abuse its market position to the detriment of other companies, particularly SMEs. That is why, in our industrial strategy, we committed to a review of competition law, which is ongoing in the Department. As part of the review, we are actively assessing digital markets, including whether those markets

pose unique challenges to competition law, such as novel forms of abuse of dominance. Part of the review will also involve assessing recommendations set out to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State by Andrew Tyrie. His proposals outline reform of the competition and consumer protection regimes led by the Competition and Markets Authority.

The Government also welcome the recent publication from the digital competition expert panel—it was published alongside the spring statement. That independent report sets out how to unlock competition in digital markets. The panel was led by the renowned economist Jason Furman, who was chief economic adviser to President Obama. The proposals are at the frontier of global thinking on how to deal with the challenges of large digital platforms. One key recommendation is to introduce a new digital markets unit to ensure that digital markets work to deliver competitive outcomes.

In particular, recommendation 5 of the report states:

“To account for future technological change and market dynamics, the digital markets unit should be able to impose measures where a company holds a strategic market status—with enduring market power over a strategic bottleneck market.”

That proposal focuses on firms with “strategic market status”. It would be backed by powers to ensure compliance. We are assessing the proposal but, if taken forward, it would mean that large platforms such as Amazon would need to comply with a statutory code of conduct or some other form of regulatory framework. The code of conduct will cover how large platforms interact with smaller firms, ensuring that that is fair. The Government will consider the reports’ proposals and report back by the summer.

Importantly, the hon. Member for Cardiff West highlights the fact that businesses, and in particular large businesses that are leaders in their industries, must act responsibly. This Government support responsible business as a force for good in society and we are prioritising in our modern industrial strategy responsible long-term business growth. Our new company reporting requirements make big businesses more open, responsive and accountable to society. That includes the issues of executive pay, and relationships with employees, suppliers and customers. Our inclusive economy partnership brings together businesses and civil society to tackle social challenges. Our civil society strategy announced that the Government would refresh their policy approach to responsible business during 2019, and we are partnering with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as we work towards that objective.

We recognise that we must be active not just in holding large corporations to account, but in supporting small businesses in our economy, including SME retailers like Bikers Gear UK. This Government are working hard to support retailers of all sizes as they respond to market pressures from a range of factors. Retailers will

need to adapt to take on the challenges and opportunities presented by the changes, and the Government want to support the sector as it responds to change.

That is why in March 2018 we established the industry-led Retail Sector Council to bring Government and industry together to boost the sector’s productivity and economic health. All retail activity in the UK, including SME retailers, is represented. I co-chair the council, and it is hugely valuable in understanding the concerns of retailers in the changing landscape. The council has agreed its priority work areas for the next two years: they focus on costs to businesses, skills and lifelong learning, employment protections, the circular economy, consumer protections, and retail and the industrial strategy. A senior industry figure will lead each of the work groups and bring proposals for action for both industry and Government back to the council for consideration.

I want to be clear that this Government want all types of retail to thrive now and in the future and that I am committed to playing my part. I and my officials in the Department regularly engage with Amazon, and I am always vocal in encouraging it to leverage its resources to the benefit of SMEs across the country. Douglas Gurr, Amazon UK country manager, serves on the Retail Sector Council which, as I said, I co-chair. I met Doug and a number of Amazon Marketplace SME retailers last October to discuss and understand the issues they faced. However, this debate has highlighted to me the need to ensure that I reiterate to Amazon that it needs to treat all suppliers with absolute fairness, and I will be sure to make that point to Amazon directly after the debate today.

The hon. Gentleman’s debate has highlighted important issues. I have said before and I will say again that SMEs are the backbone of our economy. This Government are committed to supporting SMEs and to reviewing our frameworks in the context of the ever changing marketplaces and organisations that are growing. No company should act inappropriately in a marketplace or abuse its position.

I trust that the details I have outlined today of the actions we are taking in reviewing competition law and leading the way on responsible business demonstrate to the hon. Member for Cardiff West that the Government and I take these issues very seriously. I again commend him for bringing the debate to Westminster Hall and for giving a very articulate explanation of the particular challenges that his constituent, Mr Brana, has had to endure. I would be more than happy at any stage in the future, if it were necessary, to get further information from his constituent, if he would like that, because this is an area of interest. I would like to finish by saying that I wish the hon. Gentleman’s constituent all the best in his new venture. I wish him every success and I thank the hon. Gentleman for the debate today.

Question put and agreed to.

World TB Day

4.38 pm

Nick Herbert (Arundel and South Downs) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered World TB Day and the efforts to end tuberculosis globally.

I am delighted to be able to introduce this debate. It was World TB Day on Sunday, but this is not an anniversary that we should be having to mark at all. It is wrong and extraordinary that we still have to debate the toll from death and suffering of a disease that has been curable for well over half a century, since the discovery of antibiotics by Fleming in 1928. It is unnecessary that so many people die from tuberculosis.

Imagine if the World Health Organisation announced tomorrow that a new disease had been discovered that was highly infectious, airborne and susceptible to drug-resistance, and that next year 10 million people would fall sick, of whom 1.6 million people would die. Imagine the global response to that news. That is in fact a description of the reality of tuberculosis. TB kills more people every year than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined—1.6 million people last year. Of course, there is overlap between HIV/AIDS and TB, because the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s drove the resurgence of tuberculosis. A disease that the world thought it had beaten has come back with a vengeance.

TB was first declared a global health emergency 25 years ago, in 1993. Since then, 50 million people have died. Just consider that. A disease is declared a global health emergency and subsequently 50 million people die, yet that disease is treatable and curable. That represents nothing less than a catastrophic failure on the part of the world's Governments to deal with a disease that we should deal with more effectively.

Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con): My right hon. Friend is making some good points and I congratulate him on securing the debate. He mentions the failure of world Governments. There is clearly a need for greater urgency in the approach taken by the international community in dealing with this issue, but what about the behaviour of pharmaceutical companies, which rarely invest in drugs that will help people in low and middle-income countries in the way that they would do in lucrative medications that they can sell in higher income countries, such as Great Britain?

Nick Herbert: My hon. Friend makes a good point, but I do not blame pharmaceutical companies, because I think this is a clear case of market failure. The fact is that the demand for better TB drugs, which we need, falls largely in low and middle-income countries, so there is no commercial case for sufficient investment in these new drugs. It can therefore proceed only on a public-private partnership basis. Some pharmaceutical companies have a pro bono programme for the drugs that do exist, such as Johnson & Johnson, where there is a drug to deal with drug-resistant TB. However, that is still insufficient.

This market failure is a striking contrast with what happened with AIDS. There was a serious response to the AIDS epidemic from pharmaceutical companies, not only from publicly funded programmes, but from

commercially funded investment. As a consequence we have had extraordinary innovation, and new drugs that can prevent HIV and ensure that it is not a death sentence are available. What is the difference between the two? AIDS was a disease that was killing people in the west and TB is a disease that kills the poor. That is the fundamental difference. That is why we have not had the same level of investment in tuberculosis. Another fundamental difference is that TB was already curable with antibiotics. It is just that these antibiotics were not being delivered, TB patients were not being identified and we did not have the health systems to do it.

Dr Poulter: I am a little more sceptical about the operation of some pharmaceutical companies than my right hon. Friend. In fact, one reason that the global community was able to so effectively deal with HIV—he is right to identify TB as an AIDS-defining disease—was that international Governments brought pressure to bear on pharmaceutical companies to drop the price of the medications, and push medications out in low and middle-income countries. That has not happened with TB. Unless there is a concerted effort from global Governments to encourage pharmaceutical companies to behave with greater global awareness and corporate responsibility, I am not sure we will see much change in the situation that he is describing, and change is badly needed.

Nick Herbert: This is an interesting debate, but I disagree with my hon. Friend. The drugs are not in the pipeline, because the return on investment for these companies is insufficient in the first place. I do not think that they are sitting on drugs that are available for wealthier people, which, if pressed, they could simply roll out to poorer people. There is an insufficient quantum of investment in research and development. I will come on to that point. I do not think that the need can be met by the private sector alone.

I believe that there are three key reasons why we need to take more action against this disease: humanitarian reasons, economic reasons and reasons of global public health. The humanitarian reason is that so many people are dying needlessly from this disease and falling sick. The figures speak for themselves.

The economic reason is that this awful loss of life and this illness are a drag on economic success in the poorest countries, hindering their development. There will also be a serious economic impact if we fail to tackle the disease. By 2030, it is estimated that if the current trajectory of TB continues, that will cost the world's economies \$1 trillion. Some 60% of that cost will be concentrated in the G20, and it will be caused by the 28 million deaths over that period. That is a terrible statistic, because that is the period over which tuberculosis is meant to be beaten according to the sustainable development goals. The United Nations set those goals four years ago, and said that the major epidemics—AIDS, malaria and TB—would be beaten in 15 years' time. We have just 11 years to go. On the current trajectory, TB will not be beaten for well over 100 years. There will be a further 28 million deaths during that period alone, as well as huge economic costs.

The global public health reason is the susceptibility of tuberculosis to drug resistance, because of the old-fashioned drugs that are used to treat tuberculosis. People who take

the drugs do not continue with their treatment and it is a very serious fact that there are well over 500,000 cases of drug-resistant TB in the world. The highest burden is actually in the European region. Only one in four people who have drug-resistant TB can access treatment.

We know that there are 3.5 million missing cases of TB every year that are simply undiagnosed, accounting for one in three sufferers. The proportion is much higher for drug-resistant TB, where 71% of people are missing. This constitutes not only a humanitarian issue, but a serious risk to global public health, because this is an airborne, highly infectious disease.

Nic Dakin (Scunthorpe) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman is making a very powerful case. He has just said that because so many cases are undetected, the risk is compounded. That is an important issue, which needs tackling urgently.

Nick Herbert: I strongly agree with the hon. Gentleman. I commend the work he does on the all-party parliamentary group on global tuberculosis, which I have the honour to co-chair with my friend, the hon. Member for Ealing, Southall (Mr Sharma). The big problem is all of these undetected cases. We need to find and then treat millions more people.

There is hope. Last September, the UN convened the first high-level meeting on tuberculosis, which passed a strong declaration that recommitted the world to meeting the sustainable development goal target to beat the disease, and that specifically set a new target of diagnosing and treating 40 million cases of TB by 2022—a very tight timetable. It is vital that efforts are stepped up immediately so we can meet that new, ambitious target. It will require a significant increase in the level of spending on TB programmes globally from nearly \$7 billion to \$13 billion and on tuberculosis research and development from \$700 million to \$2 billion a year.

Two key issues arise from those ambitious new commitments, the first of which is accountability. How are we going to hold the world's nations to account for their commitments at the high-level meeting? I mentioned that the world has already declared TB a global health emergency and has already set the sustainable development goals. The problem is that we keep talking about the disease but not delivering a sufficient global response to beat it, so accountability is crucial.

Among the problems with the otherwise good declaration passed at the UN is that independent accountability was struck out, but it is vital, because we have to hold countries' feet to the fire for what they have committed to do. Accountability can take multiple forms: it can be done through bilateral relationships; intergovernmental platforms at the G20, the G7 and the Commonwealth; a further review of the UN high-level meeting and the commitments made; or international institutions such as the World Health Organisation. I must say, however, that if the WHO's existing mechanisms had been effective, we would not be in this position.

My first point to the Minister, who I welcome to her place, is that the UK has a vital role to play in ensuring that there is more effective, sharper and independent accountability for the targets set at the high-level meeting. Without that accountability, I fear that we will not meet those new targets, and if we do not, we do not have a chance of beating the disease within the set timeframe.

The second issue is that we cannot escape the fact that we will need additional resource to meet the ambitions and that must come from the countries affected, particularly middle-income countries, which must find the resources to deal with it. We have seen a huge improvement in the response in India, for example. Resource must also come through multilateral institutions, particularly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, through which comes 70% of all international funding for TB. The UK can be proud that it is the third-largest contributor.

This year marks the replenishment of the Global Fund. If we are to have a hope of meeting those TB targets, it is vital that it is replenished to a higher level than before. The investment case requires a pledge of \$14 billion from the world's countries, which will be combined with an increase of nearly 50% in domestic investment, so the money will also come from individual nations. That would suggest that the UK needs to commit £1.4 billion, which is an increase on the £1.2 billion it gave last time. That is the minimum that will be required to meet the Global Fund's strategy targets and is proportionately the same as the UK previously gave, at about 13% of the budget.

I know other hon. Members want to speak, so I will make one final point. As my hon. Friend the Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter), who is no longer here, said, new drugs will be essential. New drugs for tuberculosis have become available only relatively recently; there have been no new drugs for more than 40 years. Most people do not know that we do not have an effective adult vaccine for tuberculosis, and no epidemic in human history has ever been beaten without one. We have to be able to meet the new targets for an increase in research and development, which includes providing public funding.

Again, the UK has a vital role to play because of the strength of our pharmaceutical sector and what we already do on research and development. We need a specific plan to implement a research strategy; we need to establish a baseline for countries to ensure that they are funding their fair share of research and development; and we need to establish a mechanism to co-ordinate that spend. Otherwise, again, countries will talk about the research and development gap, but never do anything to close it.

We should not need to be here. This is not a disease that we should have to talk about any longer—frankly, it is a moral disgrace that we still are. It is a needless loss of life. Many problems confront modern Governments, some of which are nearly intractable. This is not one of them. This disease can be beaten. We have known how to do that for more than half a century and, with new tools, we could do it better. In the words of the Stop TB Partnership's campaign for World TB Day last Sunday, "It's time" to beat this disease.

4.56 pm

Jim Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab): It is a pleasure to see you presiding today, Sir Christopher, and to follow the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert), whom I congratulate on securing the debate. I am grateful for the leadership that he continues to provide, and for his comprehensive introduction, which makes it easier for those of us who want to speak—

Nick Herbert: Sorry!

Jim Fitzpatrick: Not at all; it was a great speech, and well delivered.

As the right hon. Gentleman said, TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease. Despite it being entirely curable, it has claimed 1.3 million lives in the last year, including the 700 children who died every day.

According to the British Society for Immunology, one third of the world's population is infected with the TB bacterium. We urgently need to enlarge our treatment of the illness and make vaccines that are safe, affordable and accessible. The BSI states that that is especially essential for pulmonary TB. We all know the tremendous impact that widely available vaccines could have on combating the disease, as the right hon. Gentleman has said; they are absolutely essential. Will the Minister comment on how much funding the Government can allocate to investing in the research to develop such vaccines?

Funding research into vaccines is especially important because of the increasing number of TB cases that are resistant to multiple antibiotics. That is an issue around the world, with more than half a million cases of drug-resistant TB reported in 2017. I ask the Minister what work is ongoing with colleagues to ensure that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is replenished as a means to combat the global spread of drug-resistant TB, as requested by the right hon. Gentleman.

The disease has played an important part in the history of public health in my Tower Hamlets borough. The UK has a high incidence of TB compared with much of western Europe, and London accounts for one third of UK cases. In my borough, the levels have decreased in recent years, which is good news. Incidence has halved from 64.7% in 2010 to 32.5% in 2015, but TB continues to affect Tower Hamlets disproportionately compared with other parts of the country.

Tuberculosis is a disease of poverty, and my constituents are among of the most vulnerable. The approach to tackling this complex disease needs to incorporate not only research into vaccines and cures, but spreading awareness to individuals who possess the aforementioned social risk factors.

Alex Sobel (Leeds North West) (Lab/Co-op): As well as the health issues, is it not true that people with TB are socially isolated and excluded because of the effect on other people in the community? I wonder whether that is the experience in Tower Hamlets, because it is certainly the experience in places such as India.

Jim Fitzpatrick: It certainly is. Of course, one of the big downsides is that the risk of spreading the infection means that there has to be some degree of isolation, guilt and emotional stress. My hon. Friend makes a very important point.

The approach to tackling this complex disease needs to incorporate not only research into vaccines and cures but spreading awareness to individuals who possess the aforementioned social risk factors. Early intervention is also key to ensuring that the disease is treated swiftly and the risk of spreading it is minimised. That is why I am pleased that the Government are overseeing the national TB strategy for England between 2015 and 2020, enacted by TB control boards. With this approach, I am sure we will continue to see a decline in cases of TB in Tower Hamlets.

It is simply not acceptable for 10 million people globally to be falling ill from TB in 2019. This disease is curable and with the right funding treatments could be made easily accessible. Our Government need to continue to intervene to ensure that adequate investment is allocated to research vaccinations, to work with global partners and to play our part in eradicating TB worldwide.

I would be grateful to the Minister if she could confirm what is being done to work with other nations to deliver on the UN high-level meeting on TB target to find and treat 40 million people by 2022.

5 pm

Nic Dakin (Scunthorpe) (Lab): I start by congratulating the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) on spelling out how important this issue is. I also pay tribute to everybody worldwide who is working in one way or another to fight TB, whether it is on research or on the frontline of dealing with TB and finding people, supporting them and curing them of this terrible disease.

I was fortunate enough to visit Cambodia with RESULTS UK some years ago and saw the fantastic work going on, with partners from across the world working with the Cambodian health authorities to try to reach people suffering from this disease, to tackle it and root it out, but it is a forever challenge.

When I mention TB to people in everyday parlance, they believe that it is a disease of the past—a disease of the 19th century—and are surprised when I point out the fact that it is the biggest killer in the world today. We should be ashamed that that is the case because, as the right hon. Gentleman said, with the proper will, effort, focus, determination and drive, this disease could be sorted. The resources are there to tackle it. It is a matter of purpose, intention and marshalling our forces. That is partly what this debate today is trying to do.

One third of the world's population is infected with the tuberculosis bacterium, which is a shocking figure. Annually, more than 10 million people become ill with TB, resulting in 1.6 million deaths. As my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar and Limehouse (Jim Fitzpatrick) has just pointed out, the UK has a higher incidence of TB than we would wish. We have a higher incidence than the USA or other western European countries, with hotspots in places such as London, Leicester, Luton, Birmingham, Manchester and Coventry.

Indeed, when I was principal of a sixth-form college in Scunthorpe, there was an outbreak in the town, which first focused my mind and made me understand the process of ridding a small community of the disease. It is difficult and requires a lot of work. That brought home to me how much it needs sorting, because TB is an airborne disease and adults with pulmonary TB are the main transmitters, which makes it particularly problematic to root out.

We need a safe and affordable vaccine urgently and we need the significant investment in research worldwide to deliver it. As the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs pointed out, that can be done with the proper effort. There are loads of reasons to explain why that is not currently happening but, as has been said, a specific research strategy needs to be put in place and funded.

The Minister is an excellent Minister, and I know she will be very much on board and well-researched already. She has an opportunity to contribute to the global

leadership in this process. We are six months from the next UN high-level meeting on TB and the time for replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is fast approaching. The last UN high-level meeting on TB had lots of positives, but there were also areas where we could have asked for a bit more regarding the accountability that we would like so that people own the process and take it forward.

As the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, if the UK can commit to the £1.4 billion that is needed from us over the next three years to up our global game, that would be the UK playing the role that it has always played—one of global leadership, in a way that partners can stand alongside—and I am sure the Minister would want to be part of that. By making those strides, we will begin to make the strides that are necessary to get rid of this terrible disease, one that we should not still have and that is curable—one that is get-riddable. We need to do that and we need to do it now.

5.5 pm

Stephen Twigg (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship today, Sir Christopher.

I congratulate the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) on securing this important debate, but more importantly I congratulate him on his strong and consistent leadership and on the work of the all-party parliamentary group on global tuberculosis.

I declare a relevant interest. I visited Liberia with RESULTS UK in 2017 to look at its post-Ebola healthcare system strengthening. My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle) was part of that delegation and I understand, Sir Christopher, that if he catches your eye he will say a little more about what we learned.

Goal No. 3 of the sustainable development goals is good health and wellbeing. It commits the world to bringing about an end to TB by 2030. We know that, given the current rate of progress, we will miss that target by 150 years. As the right hon. Gentleman said, the UN high-level meeting on TB political declaration includes a commitment to find and treat 40 million people with TB by 2022. If we are going to do that, we not only need to diagnose but to successfully treat 8.5 million people this year, which is 2 million more people than were officially diagnosed in 2017.

As we have heard, later this year we have the sixth replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is a critical opportunity to mobilise efforts to build stronger and more resilient health systems. The Global Fund is an incredibly important mechanism for donors, recipient countries, civil society and the private sector to come together in response to these epidemics. Since it was founded in 2002, the Global Fund has helped to save over 27 million lives and that is in no small part due to the generous involvement of the United Kingdom.

Almost a fifth of Global Fund annual funding goes to fighting TB—as the right hon. Gentleman reminded us, that is 70% of all of the international financing that exists to fight tuberculosis. The UK played a leading role during the last replenishment cycle, but if we are going to close the gap in the finance that is required to

meet the targets that have already been described, all donors—including the UK—need to step up their financial commitment to the Global Fund.

As the right hon. Gentleman said, drug resistance has complicated the fight against TB, as it has the fight against other diseases. TB is a curable disease, but it requires strict, continuous treatment with a number of antibiotics over many months. As others have said, TB is now responsible for one in three deaths worldwide from drug resistance. If we do not step up our global efforts, we risk a resurgence in the incidence of TB, which could have a catastrophic impact on public health and the global economy.

The theme of the global goals is to leave no one behind, and addressing a health emergency is central to that. I reiterate to the Minister what others have said: we have an extraordinary opportunity. UK civil society has said that we want to step up in commitment. It has called on the British Government to pledge £1.4 billion to the Global Fund's vital work over the next three years. I hope the Minister will respond positively on the UK's continued commitment to tackling deadly diseases.

As we have heard, accountability is central. It involves working with civil society, working with citizens in the countries that are most affected and working with the key multilaterals—the World Bank, the United Nations and the Stop TB Partnership—so that we have a comprehensive plan that brings to an end tuberculosis by the target date of 2030. I hope the Minister will demonstrate once again the strong and clear leadership that is needed, so that we rise to the challenge in the months ahead.

5.10 pm

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): I thank the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) for securing this important debate. Many things have been said already; I will come on to the topic of my trip with RESULTS UK, on which I was accompanied by my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Stephen Twigg) and which appears in my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

During my introduction to this speech, one person has died from TB. Some 18 seconds will pass until another person dies from TB somewhere around the world. In the UK alone, someone will be infected with TB every two hours, and in 2016 there were more than 6,000 cases in the UK. However, very few people die from TB in the UK, because treatment is available. The real challenge is that 99% of tuberculosis deaths occur in developing countries. As we have heard, it is a disease of poverty. That is partly because of TB's intersection with other major issues, and particularly with compounding health conditions. It remains one of the biggest causes of death worldwide.

The sustainable development goals say that we should try to tackle this condition in the next period, but at the current rate, we will have to wait 160 years to eradicate TB and save 28 million lives. Those lives will be lost if we do not pick up the pace. Working to end tuberculosis means that we must engage with civil society and communities, and in particular work with high-risk groups and other people who are especially vulnerable. Most importantly, we must ensure there are universal, free-to-access health services, which are the best way—almost the only way—of tackling TB.

[Lloyd Russell-Moyle]

In 2017, my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby and I went to Liberia to examine its response to tuberculosis, particularly drug-resistant tuberculosis, which now accounts for a third of all tuberculosis deaths. Let us be clear: there is a treatment for drug-resistant tuberculosis, but the side effects are gruelling. It is a two-year course of medicine, with a success rate of only 50%. A person is likely to experience chronic nausea, psychosis, and painful blistering on almost all of their limbs, which they may scratch, causing further infection. They face the permanent loss of hearing in one ear, or maybe both, and after enduring that treatment they still only have a 50% chance of survival. The real problem is that the side effects of those drugs are so awful—reading out that list does not show how awful they are. If a person is experiencing psychosis, painful blisters all over their body and nausea, they are unlikely to complete their course of treatment, and that was the case for the vast majority of people we saw. They are sent back out into the community for the disease to spread.

We also saw a GeneXpert machine being used to test samples taken from people who came into hospital. The machine can be used instead of a microscope to examine a sample to see whether a person is drug resistant, and they can be treated immediately. The problem is that the machine costs \$20 per person to use. Although it was in use in Monrovia, the capital, when we went out to the county hospitals we saw that it was rarely, if ever, used. We saw the machine packed away in a cupboard, not plugged in and not being used, because \$20 per test is too high a cost. Instead of using the machine, those hospitals would do a traditional microscope test—through which it is not possible to tell whether someone has drug resistance—work out that a person had TB, give them the normal drug and send them back into the community for a few weeks. If there was no improvement, the person would be brought back in for the GeneXpert machine test. The problem is that over that time, drug resistance has spread, family members have got it and the cost has increased. Without early detection and treatment, more people will have to undergo the two-year regime that I have described. More people will drop out, and more people will suffer needlessly.

Drug-resistant TB is a battle, and if it is lost in the developing world, it is only a matter of time before drug resistance reaches these shores. We will suffer, and we will struggle to deal with it just as much, because no British person will willingly suffer those side effects. We need immediate action on pharmaceutical development to find decent drugs that do not cause such side effects, but we also need to nip the problem in the bud. As we have heard, the UK has been one of the biggest backers of the Global Fund, but it needs replenishment, and it needs it now. I hope the Minister will commit to redoubling the UK's funding.

In 2015, among people in whom non-drug resistant tuberculosis was detected, reported and treated, 80% were successfully cured. This fight can be won, but we must reach out to those vulnerable groups, fund research and ensure that everyone can access good, universal healthcare that is free at the point of delivery to eradicate this condition once and for all.

5.17 pm

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): It is a pleasure to speak in this debate. I thank the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) for bringing this issue before the House, and the Speaker's Office for allowing me to speak on it.

The issue is close to my heart. It is no secret in the House or in my constituency that I tend to get emotional when it comes to disease, and the effects of TB and HIV on children. I have had some contact with groups that fight against those diseases across the world. Images of children dying are a large part of why I am and have always been an advocate of overseas aid, although I believe we must be more stringent in ensuring that such aid is effective, and that perpetrators do not benefit from any aid that we send. My heart aches sorely when I think of children dying from a disease that is completely curable, as the right hon. Gentleman said in his introduction. It is a pity that this disease persists despite the fact that a cure is achievable and should be accessible. I wonder what we can do to stop children dying from that disease.

As a member of the all-party parliamentary group on HIV and AIDS, I am grateful for the briefing that has been provided, which is both informative and heartbreaking: informative because it gives us the background, but heartbreaking because it emphasises the issues that we all know. TB is a bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person—when we sneeze, we often wonder how far a sneeze would go if we did not put our hand over our mouth or sneeze into a hankie. TB is a serious condition, but it can be cured with proper treatment, and we can clearly do something and make a change. We should be doing more, if at all possible, although I recognise that our Government and the Minister, in particular, have taken great steps to address TB.

TB can affect any part of the body, including the glands, the bones and the nervous system. In 2017, there were some 10 million cases of TB worldwide; it is the top infectious killer, claiming some 4,400 lives a day. It is an incredible disease that strikes those who are vulnerable and weak.

TB occurs in many parts of the world. In 2017, the largest number of new TB cases occurred in south-east Asia and the western Pacific regions, which had 62% of new cases, followed by the African region, which had 25% of new cases. I want to speak a wee bit about Africa, because that is where my knowledge comes from. In 2017, 1.6 million people died of TB and 95% of those deaths occurred in low or middle-income countries. As the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs said, those on low incomes are recipients of the disease. It simply makes my heart ache. There is no need for anyone to die of TB any more, if early prevention and medication are available. I say this gently, but there is no excuse for those deaths.

It is clear that TB disproportionately impacts hard-to-reach groups, including people who use drugs, prisoners and people living with HIV. Challenge Ministries NI, which is from my constituency, does a lot of work in Swaziland in Africa. Every year, the children from that school and hospital in Swaziland come to Northern Ireland—they are sponsored to do so—as part of an outreach project. That is one of their ways of creating some income to take back home. Every child in that choir is

HIV-positive, in many cases from abuse or directly from their mother's womb. I can clearly see what our Government have done with some of their work on HIV/AIDS and the cure. A short time ago, I met some people from the HIV/AIDS group, and they put me in contact with some other groups. I hope we can do more work in Swaziland and Zimbabwe, where they are now working.

I am conscious of time, so I will work towards a conclusion. Swaziland is a little country where almost one in every two people has AIDS. A hospice inside the orphanage is staffed by voluntary nursing staff from the UK. The end result of an HIV diagnosis is often that TB is the killer. TB is the killer of those with complex needs. That matches the figures, which show that TB is the leading cause of death for people living with AIDS, accounting for one third of deaths. In 2017, 300,000 people died from TB and 920,000 people living with AIDS fell ill with TB. It is colossally hard to encapsulate in the numbers how many people are dying. We see young people who have had the TB vaccine and been cured. When I see them singing lustily in concerts in the churches in my constituency, I see practically what we can do if we get in there early. That is what the right hon. Gentleman said in his introduction, and it is why I am totally committed to making the changes we wish to see.

In 2017, 49% of all people with HIV-associated TB did not reach care, according to the data. The World Health Organisation referred to the African region, where the burden of HIV-associated TB is the highest. I see that in the missions in my constituency that work in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and other countries.

I will quickly finish in the time that the Chair has indicated to me. Will the Minister tell us whether there is an intention to step up the financial commitment in the upcoming sixth replenishment conference scheduled for October? As the right hon. Gentleman said, it is important to do that now and then work towards October to try to make it happen. We can and must provide a better response if we are to meet our achievable, yet slightly out-of-reach goal of eradicating TB by 2030. If we can do it—I believe we can—we need to do it together with other nations and use any influence we have to remind them of their international duty to ensure that no child in the world ever dies from this terrible disease.

5.23 pm

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Christopher. I thank the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) for securing this important debate. He spoke with conviction, passion and urgency and I think we all agree that it is ridiculous that we are having to debate something that is curable and treatable and that we all agree needs to be resolved.

In 1882, when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the cause of tuberculosis, the disease killed one in every seven people living in the United States and Europe. Today, TB is a treatable and curable disease, yet it is still one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Shockingly, one quarter of the world's population is estimated to be infected by latent TB. Ten million people fall ill with the disease annually, and it caused 1.6 million deaths in 2017 alone. To put that in perspective, that is 30% of Scotland's entire population.

The people most likely to die of tuberculosis are the poorest and most vulnerable throughout the world. In 2017, there were fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000 of population in most high-income countries.

In contrast, however, 30 countries—primarily in the global south—account for 87% of the world's TB cases. Countries such as Mozambique, the Philippines and South Africa have more than 500 new cases per 100,000 of their population. I remind everyone in this debate that tuberculosis is preventable, treatable and curable. There is some good news: more than 60 million lives have been saved since 2000 alone, and we have the power to end tuberculosis in our lifetime. However, that can happen only if the Government take seriously the need for international development funding to rid the world of TB.

I have deep concerns about the former Foreign Secretary's call a couple of weeks ago to change the purpose of the Department for International Development from poverty reduction to furthering

“the nation's overall strategic goals”.

The Department must remain absolutely dedicated to its mission of helping the world's most vulnerable people. That is how we keep the faith with the public and their kind generosity.

The sustainable development goals agreed by world leaders in 2015 have a target to end TB by 2030. We have heard about that already today. However, if the global mortality rate for tuberculosis continues to fall at the current level, tuberculosis will not be beaten in 10, 20 or 50 years, but in 160 years. We are failing people globally on TB. We must work to combat that, and the UK Government can make a significant contribution to the fight against TB with aid funding aimed at tackling poverty and inequality globally, rather than aid viewed through the prism of national and commercial interest.

The first ever UN General Assembly high-level meeting on tuberculosis in September endorsed a declaration that committed to finding and treating 40 million people with TB by 2022 and mobilising increased funding for TB programmes and research. Without significant progress on TB prevention, diagnosis and treatment, we will not reach the UN high-level meeting commitments or the SDGs, both of which the UK signed up for. The Global Fund, which provides 70% of all international financing for TB programmes, is asking donors to step up their investments and, in addition, is asking the UK Government to pledge £1.4 billion at the forthcoming replenishment conference. May I ask the Minister, as everyone else has, whether the Government will commit to the full funding and ensure that world leaders are held to account on delivering the UN high-level meeting political declaration? I hope to hear that shortly.

In Scotland, our universities have been at the forefront of research into tuberculosis. The University of Dundee in my constituency has collaborated with the University of Cape Town and the pharmaceuticals division of Bayer to develop new treatments, while research published by the University of St Andrews—just over the River Tay from where I am—outlining new methods to diagnose and treat undetected TB was hailed as a “game changer”. The Scottish Government have increased their international development fund to £10 million a year to tackle global challenges including epidemics and health inequalities. As part of Scotland's global goals partnership agreement

[Chris Law]

with Malawi, it has pledged to strengthen the prevention and management of infectious diseases such as malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS.

There is a direct link between TB and HIV in that TB is the leading killer of HIV-positive people and causes approximately one in four deaths among those who are HIV-positive. People infected with HIV are up to 30 times more likely to develop active TB, and the World Health Organisation has recommended implementing collaborative TB-HIV activities to tackle that. Given the devastating impact that tuberculosis can have on those with HIV, will the UK Government use their influence to ensure that TB programmes and research are similarly prioritised and appropriately funded to meet the global ambition of eliminating tuberculosis altogether?

Finally, while tuberculosis is no longer as prevalent as it was when Dr Koch discovered its cause in 1882, it remains—tragically and ridiculously—an epidemic across the globe. We have to remind ourselves that it is treatable. World TB Day needs to be constantly in our consciousness, and we need to make TB synonymous with the past. We need to eradicate it with the same targeted focus and precision that were brought to polio and smallpox.

5.29 pm

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Christopher. I, too, thank the right hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert) for not only securing the debate, but providing me with my first opportunity to respond from the Front Bench. He is very passionate about this topic, and that passion has been reflected in the contributions of every Member this afternoon.

Last week, along with many colleagues present in the Chamber, I attended an event in Speaker's House on ending tuberculosis, where I was deeply moved by the impassioned words of Emily Wise, a doctor who had been on the front line of the battle against TB, working with Médecins Sans Frontières in Uzbekistan. She spoke of her trauma as she watched a patient die, and her anger at the fact that, as a doctor, she was unable to save her. The patient did not die for medical reasons; she did not die because Emily did not know how to save her, or because TB is incurable. Let me repeat Emily's professional diagnosis of why her patient died. She said:

"In this modern age, all deaths from TB boil down to a lack of commitment from the international political community and the pharmaceutical industry to address this disease."

Her message is clear: as politicians, we must do more. We have to step up to the challenge of ending the world's deadliest infectious disease, and it is entirely within our reach to do so.

Sunday marked World TB Day: an occasion to remind ourselves of where we are in the fight to end TB. It has been curable for more than 50 years, yet in 2017 it killed 1.6 million people, and there were 10 million new infections, of which 3.6 million were never officially diagnosed or treated. It is a disease of inequality, with the poorest most at risk, and 95% of the deaths occur in low and middle-income countries. Here at home, the poorest 10% of people are at a seven times higher risk of contracting TB. According to the World Health Organisation, at the current rate of progress we will fail to reach the global goal of ending TB by 2030.

I am hopeful that the world might be beginning to wake up to that severe injustice. As we heard, last September the first UN high-level meeting on TB took place. Governments committed to significant investment for programmes and research. The meeting was clearly a step in the right direction, but we must now accelerate progress. We know that in order to effectively diagnose and treat TB, countries need a strong public health system. My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle) made that point very strongly.

In the UK, 81% of people who contract TB fully recover, thanks to our wonderful national health service. Does the Minister agree that the Department for International Development ought to focus on building strong public services, so that people's right to access healthcare is not based on their ability to pay? Of course, getting people the treatment that they need also requires international funding. That is why we must ensure that the Global Fund is fully resourced and I, too, encourage the Government to make a commitment to increase the UK's contribution to it.

Finally, let me address the issue of access to medicines. In all countries, there are now TB strains that are resistant to at least some of the treatments available. In recent years, new, highly effective medicines for multi-drug-resistant TB have been approved, but they are reaching only 5% of the people who need them. Among the barriers to access, affordability is a major concern—[*Interruption.*] Not now, please.

That lack of affordability is despite huge public investment from the UK and other sources into one of the drugs: bedaquiline. We have a crisis in the research and development system for medicines. I therefore ask the Minister whether DFID will commit to working with other Government Departments, and partners globally, to revisit the system of exclusive intellectual property rights that prevents drugs from getting to those who need them the most.

Parliamentarians last discussed TB nine months ago. It seems that not an awful lot has changed. I hope that when we are next together, we can reflect on more progress.

5.33 pm

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Harriett Baldwin): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Christopher. [*Interruption.*] If only you could stop the noise outside, we would not be quite so distracted. I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert), whose leadership on this issue is absolutely remarkable. Not only does he co-chair the all-party parliamentary group with the hon. Member for Scunthorpe (Nic Dakin), but he shows leadership globally, in the Global TB Caucus. His contribution to the recent Lancet Commission report on building a tuberculosis-free world was also incredibly valuable.

It is a real honour for me to respond to the debate. I wish to pay tribute on the record to my former ministerial colleague, my right hon. Friend the Member for North East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt), who would have responded to the debate. I assure colleagues that I will pick up where he left off in championing this cause.

We heard a really passionate case from my right hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs on why we need not only to mark World TB Day with debates such as today's, but to keep sustained momentum behind the progress that the world has made. I am always a sunny optimist, and I like to see that progress. Some 53 million lives have been saved since 2000, and there has been a 37% reduction in mortality. We heard from the hon. Member for Poplar and Limehouse (Jim Fitzpatrick) about the progress in the UK and our 2015 strategy. Our wonderful NHS is making tremendous progress, and we are now at a 30-year low, but I acknowledge that there is still more to do, and we have heard powerful speeches arguing that. A range of points were raised, and I will try to address them all in the few moments that are left.

The importance of the work that was done with the declaration cannot be underestimated, because it is a forum where the whole world can come together and make commitments. The UK was proud to lead the work behind the declaration at the UN. The importance of the work on missing cases also cannot be overemphasised. Some of the Global Fund work has supported finding those missing cases. Each missing person can infect another 15 people through not being diagnosed or treated. So far, out of 1.5 million missing cases, 450,000 have been found.

I heard the call from my right hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs for strong accountability mechanisms. The UN is a very good forum for that. We want to ensure that money is spent on frontline treatment, and that any accountability mechanism adds value by working with the grain of what is already there, making best use of existing mechanisms, and is proportionate.

We should also note that there has been further progress since last year's debate. We should put on the record the fact that the M72 vaccine seems to be showing promising early results. The UK spends a significant amount—I think it is £12.7 million every year—on research. It is important to co-ordinate research globally, and the World Health Organisation is the right organisation to do that. I assure colleagues that the UK will remain at the forefront as a leader, and that we will take part in the replenishment. I cannot, however, announce exactly how much it will be; obviously, we will wait until October to do that.

The hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle) spoke powerfully about the side-effects and the treatment that he witnessed at first hand in Liberia, and we heard a range of other powerful speeches. I welcome the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) to the Front Bench; he did fantastically in his first outing in that role. I also recognise the call for leadership made by the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Stephen Twigg) and note the strong links between the work done in Eswatini and the work that the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) sees in his constituency in Northern Ireland. I pay tribute to the Scottish research tradition, which goes back 100 years, and to the contribution that the Scottish Government make to this work.

I am not sure how much time I have to sum up, but the UK can be proud of being the third largest donor to the Global Fund, which managed to reach 5 million people in 2017 alone. I do not have the figures for 2018, but that is a significant impact. The Global Fund is also

very important in terms of research, and of course where we have strong bilateral relationships—particularly in DFID countries—it combines with the work we do to strengthen health systems in those countries. The Global Fund also fits in with DFID's wider work to reduce poverty and improve access to services in some very hard-to-reach places.

I am proud that the UK is the second largest donor to the current replenishment of the Global Fund. Colleagues have recognised the £1.2 billion that we have contributed since 2017, and we are the first and only country in the world to have enshrined in law our overseas development assistance contribution of 0.7% every year. We will announce our replenishment in October, but we will continue to support the fund in its remarkable and successful work of reducing the burden not only of TB, but—as hon. Members have noted—of HIV and malaria in the world's poorest countries. The fund is central to efforts to tackle TB, but we need to link that to strengthening health systems in countries where DFID has a strong bilateral programme. We will certainly be playing our part.

We continue our strong tradition, which goes back more than a century, of being involved in research and development as one of the largest funders of tuberculosis research worldwide. Several colleagues spoke about research by drug companies. We are a leading supporter of product development partnerships, which are a mechanism to incentivise the pharmaceutical industry and academia to develop new therapies and diagnostics so that the intellectual property can be fairly distributed. As part of that effort, we are investing £37.5 million in the TB Alliance for the development of new drug regimens, particularly where current treatments are failing because of antimicrobial resistance—a point that was raised several times in this debate.

The challenges that the world still needs to overcome include antimicrobial resistance, ensuring that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged can benefit from care, and the complexities of patients who have both HIV and TB. We have heard the shocking statistic that antimicrobial resistance is now responsible for more than 700,000 deaths a year, of which drug-resistant TB accounts for a third. In response to that challenge, we are leading the work to bring new effective antibiotics to market, funding the development of new treatment combinations for resistant TB, and investing in new ways to rapidly test for drug resistance; it was interesting to hear the anecdote told by the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown about the cost of the GeneXpert machine, which is clearly something that we all need to think about. Since 2002, the Global Fund has provided financial support to implement multi-drug-resistant TB diagnosis and treatment in 25 of the 27 most affected countries.

One of the most challenging aspects of TB is the difficulty of finding some of the people affected. If we are to meet our sustainable development goals, we will need to sustain our efforts to find the missing 1.5 million. The likelihood of progression to active TB infection can be reduced if TB is detected and treated early in people who are HIV-positive, so we are actively working on programmes to identify such cases and respond appropriately.

There are clearly a range of challenges, and sustained action will be needed. I welcome the support that colleagues have shown for the international policy dimension, the leadership on research, and the strong bilateral partnerships

[*Harriett Baldwin*]

on health, particularly in DFID's focus countries. It is clear that progress has been made, but that it needs to be stepped up. We have heard the request for the replenishment of the Global Fund and will closely analyse what the UK can do and what other donor countries will be doing.

This debate has been extremely important in highlighting the issue, and I pay tribute again to the all-party group and its chairs for their leadership. I assure my right hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs that the UK Government will continue, both at the UN and with our allies in DFID's priority countries and around the world, to step up our impact and resolve the many issues raised today.

Sir Christopher Chope (in the Chair): Nick Herbert has a minute and a half to sum up, if he wishes.

5.44 pm

Nick Herbert: I am grateful for the Minister's response, which reiterated the UK Government's commitment. I thank all hon. Members for their contributions today and for their commitment to beating this terrible disease. I reiterate that the UK has a leadership position, and this year we can show it by replenishing the Global Fund, pressing for independent accountability and trying to achieve better co-ordination for research and development. Yes, we have made progress, but there is more to do. The UK needs to continue to show the necessary leadership to beat this terrible disease.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered World TB Day and the efforts to end tuberculosis globally.

5.45 pm

Sitting adjourned.

Written Statements

Wednesday 27 March 2019

TREASURY

Supervision of Co-operative Bank 2008-13: Independent Review

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):

On 6 March 2018 I laid a direction before Parliament using the powers conferred by sections 77(1) and (2) and 78(5) and (6) of the Financial Services Act 2012 (“the Act”), to require that the Prudential Regulation Authority (“the PRA”) should undertake an investigation into supervision of the Co-operative Bank plc between 2008 and 2013. The direction required that the PRA appoint an independent person to undertake the review and that the review should be completed within one year. The PRA appointed Mr Mark Zelmer, a former Deputy Superintendent of the Office of Superintendent of Financial Institutions, Canada, and previously a senior official at the Bank of Canada, to undertake the review.

The PRA presented the completed report setting out the findings of the review to HM Treasury on 4 March 2019. In accordance with section 82(6) of the Act I have today laid the report before Parliament. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office and as required by section 82(2) of the Act the report will also be published on the Government website.

The report makes detailed recommendations for the PRA and the Bank of England (“the BoE”) relating to supervisory policy and practice. The PRA and the BoE welcome the Report’s recommendations and have today published a document responding to them.

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/prudential-regulation/publication/2019/pru-and-banks-response-to-the-independent-review-of-the-co-operative-bank>.

The Financial Conduct Authority has also welcomed the report. While the report contains no formal recommendations for HM Treasury, Mr Zelmer observes that in future relevant authorities should continue to engage early and regularly on firm-specific issues where necessary. The Treasury agrees with this observation, while ensuring that we continue to respect the independence of the regulators.

I would like to thank Mr Zelmer for his work in undertaking the review and producing this report.

[HCWS1457]

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Hong Kong: Six-monthly Report

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Jeremy Hunt): The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2018. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also

available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office.

I commend the report to the House.

[HCWS1454]

Westminster Foundation for Democracy: Tailored Review

The Minister for Asia and the Pacific (Mark Field): I am announcing today the publication of the recent tailored review of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), an arm’s-length body of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

WFD was established in 1992, with a focus on strengthening democracy in Africa, Asia, eastern Europe and central Asia, the middle east and Latin America. Since 1992, it has played an important part in delivering UK expertise on democracy and democratic institutions.

The principal aims of tailored reviews are to ensure public bodies remain fit for purpose, are well governed and properly accountable for what they do.

In conducting this tailored review, officials engaged with stakeholders in the UK and overseas, including across UK Government, civil society, as well as with WFD’s staff and management.

The review reported in December 2018. A plan to implement the recommendations has been developed and agreed between the FCO and WFD, and will be taken forward by officials. The review found that “given the scale of the challenges facing democracies, the review team believe that WFD’s purpose remains as relevant and necessary today as when it was established in 1992”. The review also contains a number of recommendations to strengthen WFD’s corporate governance and its relationship with the FCO.

Copies of the review will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The attachment can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-03-27/HCWS1455/>.

[HCWS1455]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Contingency Liability: Financial Assurance

The Secretary of State for International Development (Penny Mordaunt): On 23 August 2018, the Department for International Development (DFID) published its technical notice entitled “Delivering humanitarian aid programmes if there’s no-deal Brexit deal”. The notice committed DFID to funding the post-March outputs of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) programmes contracted to UK organisations, if ECHO terminates funding in the event of no deal.

The technical notice was issued to enable UK organisations to bid for ECHO funding prior to our exit, where they were bidding as lead or sole implementers. UK organisations argued that they were losing bidding

opportunities due to ECHO'S requirement that they prove at application stage that they could fund the post-March 2019 outputs of the programme in the event of a no-deal. The UK Government's commitment enabled UK organisations to demonstrate in their applications that programmes would be funded in a no-deal scenario. UK aid spending in this case will prevent both loss of funding to UK organisations, and severe disruption to humanitarian programmes.

At present, the House is due to be in recess from 4 April. Therefore, it is not possible to offer the standard scrutiny period of 14 sitting days due to the potential urgency of the situation. However, if a Member signifies an objection by giving notice of a parliamentary question or otherwise raising the matter in Parliament before Parliament rises for the Easter recess, final approval to proceed with incurring the liability will be withheld pending an examination of the objection. In addition, if a Member raises an objection with me by correspondence after the Easter recess has begun but before 10 April, final approval to proceed will likewise be withheld pending an examination of the objection. The consequences of withholding the liability would be the halting or even cancellation of programmes delivering vital aid programmes to the world's vulnerable, and the failure to uphold our commitment to UK humanitarian and development organisations.

Parliament was informed of this commitment on 23 August, when a letter from the Secretary of State drawing attention to the technical notice was deposited in both House Libraries.

In March 2019 I agreed to extend the financial assurance to cover any direct bid ECHO, European Development Fund, Development Co-operation Instrument and EU Aid Volunteers ODA funding to UK organisations where that funding will be cut by the EU in the event of no deal. This includes contracts and grants awarded prior to August 23. My Foreign Office colleague will make a separate announcement regarding heading four instruments under his remit.

The exact size of the contingency liability is still unknown, as UK organisations continue to bid for ECHO programming and we continue to await the EU approval processes. The size of the liability is therefore subject to change, though our current estimate is approximately £90 million, based on a reduced number of bids this year. The likelihood that the liability will be called is directly proportional to the likelihood of no deal.

The Treasury has approved this proposal.

[HCWS1456]

Ministerial Correction

Wednesday 27 March 2019

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Yemen

The following is an extract from the Urgent Question to the Minister for Asia and the Pacific on Tuesday 26 March 2019.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): The Government contract the manufacture of UK arms for Saudi Arabia. They contract the issuing of bombs into UK aircraft in the Kingdom. They have RAF soldiers in command centres, and now we learn that we have ground assets in Yemen. So can I ask again, because I do not think the Minister answered the question: if this does not constitute being a member of the coalition, what on earth does? What legal advice have Her Majesty's Government received about potential complicity in war crimes and international humanitarian law abuses, which we could now be liable for?

Mark Field: Will the hon. Gentleman please be assured that there is ongoing legal advice on all the matters to which he referred? I should perhaps also say, to correct the record in that regard, that we do not have our liaison officers or others in command centres with the Saudis. The liaison is in Saudi; they are there in a training and advisory capacity.

[Official Report, 26 March 2019, Vol. 657, c. 196.]

Letter of correction from the Minister for Asia and the Pacific:

An error has been identified in the response I gave to the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle).

The correct response should have been:

Mark Field: Will the hon. Gentleman please be assured that there is ongoing legal advice on all the matters to which he referred? I should perhaps also say, to correct the record in that regard, that we do not have our liaison officers or others in command centres with the Saudis. **We have a very small number of staff working in Saudi headquarters in a liaison capacity only.**

[Official Report, 10 April 2019, Vol. 658, c. 4MC.]

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