

HORSHAM DISTRICT OLDER PEOPLES FORUM

QUESTION TIME WITH JEREMY QUIN MP

At HDC/WSCC Offices Main Conference Room

Friday 16th November 2018 10.30am – 12.30pm

(The full text of previously submitted questions are appended to these notes)

Jeremy Quin answers are as understood by HDOPF note-taker.

Question 1: (Summary)

CAN WE BE REASSURED THAT LIFE WILL BE RELATIVELY NORMAL WITHOUT RISKS FROM SHORTAGES OF MEDECINES AND CARERS WHEN BREXIT HAPPENS NEXT MARCH?

Jeremy Quin

The Current Political Deal deserves support because it preserves almost 100% of current frictionless trade by which we have an efficient supply chain from Europe of very large parts of our Pharmaceutical supplies and our supplies of Fresh Food. Without a deal there would be regulatory controls in France which could cause serious disruption (temporary shortages and perishing of fresh food) if common sense mitigation of problems were not applied.

The Government is making contingency plans to provide for the worst case happening.

Supplementaries (in discussion from the floor)

Care and Health Workers: Brexit does not mean that there is no immigration but that the UK has control of it and has its own policies. Care worker and health worker skilled persons would be welcome. Currently there are additional training schemes for Doctors and Nurses.

Payments to the EU: The £35-39bn withdrawal payment is for commitments made as a member of the EU.

Commitment to the EU: The UK has never been committed to the European Project of Ever-Closer-Union and the single Eurozone currency but has always acted only as a member of a Trading Union Partnership. Remaining in the Union would continue with the UK thinking to be outside a political structure.

The current process: The Government and the EU have an agreement on the terms relating of the UK Withdrawal which will be ratified by the EU on 25th November next. The UK Government will then bring the agreement to the UK Parliament for their ratification. This will be a process of debate ending with a vote on 11th December next. The **Future Trading relationship** and arrangements have also to be agreed in principle. The detail is to be negotiated in a transition period during which the UK will trade as now with the EU but will not be a member. The length of the transition period is between one and two years.

UK Strength: withdrawal from the benefits of the union is harmful in the immediate term but the UK is the sixth largest world economy with a successful currency and should be capable of succeeding unencumbered by the ties of and payments to the Union

Questions 8 & 9 (Summary)

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL WITH HORSHAM DISTRICT OLDER PERSONS FORUM AND AGE UK HORSHAM DISTRICT, SUPPORT A SCHEME FOR MOBILITY SCOOTER DRIVER TRAINING RUN BY THE TOWN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP.

WITH THE GROWING NUMBER OF DRIVERS AND SCOOTERS AND THE GROWING NUMBERS OF SERIOUS ACCIDENTS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT BE TAKING ANY PART IN PROMOTING COMPETENCE, SAFETY, AND THIRD PARTY INSURANCE FOR MOBILITY SCOOTER DRIVERS?

Jeremy Quin

This is a serious question which deserves being fed into government awareness. I support the effort and will visit the training to have substance to report to government. A culture of acceptance for training needs to be built. An open mind on influence from the growing numbers.

Government compulsion would not be envisaged – creating more financial burdens on people and government- certainly not in times of resource restraint.

Supplementaries (in discussion from the floor)

Could there be a government publicity campaign promoting competence, safety and insurance at the point of scooter sales where local schemes could latch on with their information of training availability.

Question 10 (Summary)

IS THE SELF CERTIFICATION OF DRIVERS OVER 70 YEARS OLD FOR THEIR FITNESS TO DRIVE A SAFE SYSTEM OR SHOULD THERE NOT BE REGULAR TESTING OF COMPETENCE AND HEALTH?

Jeremy Quin

Seventy Years is not old nowadays and although many push the conditions and there are accidents

Government is nervous about introducing additional rules and careful about burdening Doctors with tests every three years.

Statistics suggest over the country that accidents are not a sufficiently serious problem.

Question 13 (Summary)

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S PROMISE OF A CAP ON PERSONAL SHARE OF PAYMENT FOR CARE HOME FEES HAS BEEN DROPPED BY THE CHANCELLOR. IS THE PARTY'S PROMISE ENDED?

Jeremy Quin

This question relates to the 1948 Generation which dislikes State intervention in regulating the inheritance which people wish to pass on to their children. It nevertheless encounters the demographic of the increase in numbers of Older People needing social care. The 1970s revolution in longevity now means that in Sussex there are more people retired than in work and the question of how their care is to be paid for becomes urgent.

Opposing parties have labelled each others' attempts at funding as 'death' or 'alzheimer' taxes with negative results. It is time for parties to get together with a solution.

The Government is consulting this autumn with a Green Paper: Options on funding a cap level.

- increase payments from the younger generation by taxation raising the National Insurance payment which is the traditional means of paying for current social care out of current taxation.
- increase payment from the younger generation by compulsory Pension Insurance from the age of 40 as in Germany a proposal helping the future but not the present.

Supplementaries (in discussion from the floor).

Older persons in work, now exempt, should pay National Insurance: People past the automatic retirement age do not pay national insurance if in work. This is intended as an encouragement for them to remain in employment but could be a target for increasing the funding of social care.

The retirement age should be raised commensurate with the increased longevity and health of the working population national insurance contributions toward social care would thus be a longer period.

Question from the floor (Arthur Carden: Horsham Neighbourhood Watch)

VEHICLE CRIME, BURGLARY, AND DRUG TAKING CRIMES ARE COMMONPLACE AS THE CONSEQUENCE OF GOVERNMENT LACK OF SUPPORT TO POLICING. YOU ARE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TREASURY MACHINE PLEASE GIVE MORE MONEY TO THE POLICE.

Jeremy Quin

A comprehensive review of funding is due.

In the first eight years of the Conservative government the crime rate was decreasing supporting the view that policing could be relaxed.

In Sussex the Police Commissioner supported the Chief Constable's increase in numbers by 200 in two to three years by raising the precept. I have spent an evening with the police in Horsham Police Station to have some gauge of their daily work.

Crime is spreading from urban centres through drugs which trigger other crime.

Police need help from the public and Neighbourhood Watch does good work in this respect. Observation of crime and concerns should be reported.

Police Commissioners who replaced Police Boards are not an expensive luxury – they are more accountable than Chief Constables.

Question 16 (Summary)

PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ARE BUILDING LARGE NEW ESTATES OF HOUSING AROUND HORSHAM. THEY COMMONLY SEEM ABLE TO REDUCE THEIR PROMISES OF THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE OF SCHOOLS, GP SURGERIES, TRANSPORT LINKS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING. ONCE BUILT WHERE ARE THE EQUALLY NECESSARY SERVICE WORKERS (TEACHERS, POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE, NURSES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY WORKERS) COMING FROM AND IS AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE TO THEM?

Jeremy Quin

This is a constant question arising out of the Housing Expansion policy for the South East.

Price of a house in our time has risen from 2 to 3 times personal annual income to 10 times annual income nowadays – 11 times in Horsham. (there is a £9 billion programme for affordable housing ?).

Infrastructure Support locally

- A new School next year for North Horsham in preparation whilst houses are being built.
- there is a new Primary School for Wickhurst Green.
- HDC and the NHS are actively pursuing new GP Surgeries.
- WSCC is reporting on services relating to Horsham and Crawley rail stations.

Supplementaries (in discussion from the floor)

Planning Permission Conditions: there should be a change of rules if necessary to prevent developers being able to re-negotiate their promises in particular the quotas of affordable housing stipulated.

Development effects on the existing town:

- danger of gridlock in the town centre – there is congestion at some pinch points and noticeable air pollution. Look forward to electric cars by 2030.
- important to keep a vibrant town centre – John Lewis/Waitrose development welcome at the centre -not on the outskirts as has been planning practice.

NHS Funding: development increases NHS costs.

NHS funding is government's first priority to 2023/4, responding with more resources to growing population (longevity); change in demography (more older multiple care patients); and medical advances in treatment. Increase of 25% in training resources for doctors and nurses.

Support for extra funding: must come from a flourishing economy. A good sign for this is the current very high level of employment and the Government cutting the national debt and thus the spending on paying for it.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR (> Mr QUIN REPLY)

• WHY ARE THERE THESE DAMAGING CUTS IN EDUCATION FUNDING?

> NHS funding priority reduces other departments' share of total taxation fund. In view of Social Care and NHS problems, Education spending cannot be increased. Schools have to manage their funds.

Horsham schools have gained 12% in funding over the last two years and payment per pupil is more than in other developed countries.

- **CAN THE DEBATE OVER BREXIT BE CALMED DOWN FROM MP'S AND PRESS HYSTERIA**

> The debate over the next two weeks would benefit from calm and careful deliberation with respect for opposing views – emotional one-liners have tended to predominate recently.

David Davies and Dominic Raab have been vilified but they are good and thoughtful people.

I would like people to write to me.

At this point Jeremy Quin had to leave the meeting to return to Westminster where political business urgently required him. Martin Bruton expressed his thanks to Jeremy Quin for coming to Horsham in such circumstance. Jeremy had said that he was extremely reluctant to cancel for a second time.

MEETING DISCUSSION AFTER Mr QUIN QUESTIONS

- **ALLOCATION OF NATIONAL HEALTH FUNDS**

The Local Clinical Commissioning Group is in Special measures having overspent its allocation.

The local Redhill Hospital Trust is in surplus. A formula allocates money to their budgets – how do their defaults get resolved?

Primary Care in this district is underfunded irrespective of the fact of our aged population needing it more than most.

Charity Agencies : Age UK, Alzheimer's, Carers Support: are worried at social care not being afforded now, not to speak of in the future, and this care is not just for the aged.

- **YOUNGER GENERATION SUPPORTING THE OLD**

If Horsham is at all typical the younger generation will have difficulty with their employment and earnings to support the pensioners and those needing care.

Large employers: RSA and Pharmaceuticals have gone from the town. Transport to work elsewhere is crowded and expensive. The growing number of non-working elderly and unemployed mean a greater financial burden on the young.

- **PAY AS YOU DELIVER: A TAX PROPOSAL FOR OVER-USED ROADS**

There is ever-increasing use of internet ordering of goods for home delivery with resulting heavy use of the roads system. The condition of the roads is currently criticised and declared to be under-funded. Would a tax upon deliveries be a welcome aid to the funding of road maintenance?

- **GP PRACTICES ON CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP BORDERS**

GP Practice lists are filling up to capacity. Billingshurst on borders of Horsham and South Coast Commissioning Groups would like to use Horsham services.

- **EXPANSION OF GATWICK AIRPORT**

Proposals for expansion of Gatwick airport traffic by up to 50% by 2030 pose some questions for development of Horsham population infrastructure, services and facilities.

- **PUBLIC TRANSPORT HORSHAM TO EAST SURREY HOSPITAL**

In a recent Survey of bus users 75% of respondents were over the age of 70 and 38% used buses for medical appointments. Travel from Horsham by bus involves a change of bus at Gatwick and takes one hour and forty minutes. Improvement needed.

Previously submitted Questions for the HDOPF MP Question Time event 14th November 2018

1. Brexit is causing many elderly people to worry that there will be a disaster when the UK leaves next March. Can you reassure us that life will go on relatively normally and that the elderly or anyone else will not be at risk i.e. through lack of prescription medicines and lack of care workers?
2. The increase in the elderly population will lead to us being 25% of the population in the not too distant future and is already being cited as the reason for the huge additional burden and

cost to the NHS and thus the taxpayer. What long term action is the government taking to plan for the increase in the elderly population and their life needs?

3. Whilst the rise in the elderly is cited as being the cause of a huge drain on the NHS, 80% of new births are to immigrant mothers and the population is also increasing by 270,000+ immigrants a year. Surely that amount of immigration must have an effect on the provision and cost to the taxpayer for health services, education, housing etc. Why isn't that being mentioned? What plans does the government have to cope with it?
4. I am worried that the NHS is crumbling due to the burden both financially and bed wise, of older people who are regarded as 'bed blockers' because they cannot be discharged from hospital due to lack of local authority services, to enable care packages to be put in place. What is the government doing about this?
5. My wife and I paid National Insurance all our working lives. My wife now has dementia and I was her full time carer, she is now in a nursing home. I was led to believe that the NI contributions we both fully paid meant that our health care would be looked after from 'cradle to grave.' I have found little help for me or my wife outside of our front door and I have had to pay for 2 wheelchairs, a stair lift, Dementia Club day care fees and now nursing home fees for my wife, all out of income that has already been taxed. Is it not possible to at least get tax relief on such expenses?
6. Will tighter immigration rules including non-EU and EU after Brexit mean a huge shortage of nurses and other care staff i.e. for care homes? There is already a shortage of carers. What hope can you offer that this will not get even worse after Brexit when such low skilled (by immigration definition) workers from Europe who prop up our system now, no longer come?
7. Many retired people have left the UK for the sun and are living full time or as 'swallows' in EU countries i.e. Spain. What effect will leaving the EU have on them? Will this lead to many having to return to the UK i.e. because of the loss of free healthcare?
8. Horsham Town Community Partnership with Horsham District Older Persons Forum and Age UK Horsham District are currently providing a free safety training to mobility scooter users in Horsham Town centre. If the project is a success, we intend to provide training throughout Horsham District. Does the government anytime in the future intend to make it compulsory

for mobility scooter riders to undertake a competency test and/or have adequate insurance?
Is this local initiative one that you would support?

9. The number of mobility scooter users is now estimated to be 350,000 in the UK and with the number of fatalities and major injuries continues to rise, has the Government any plans to introduce compulsory driving standards and mandatory insurance cover? If not would the government consider launching a publicity initiative to focus on driving mobility scooters more slowly and recognising that pedestrians have right of way at all times. In view of the number of accidents involving mobility scooters - we would ask you to champion our cause and press the government to initiate a publicity drive to encourage safer driving.
10. The current system for drivers on reaching 70 is for them to simply 'self-certify' that they are fit to drive. Should there not be a statutory system put in place to check health, eyesight and driving competence on a regular basis? Should it not be compulsory for doctors, opticians and other health professionals to report anyone who they suspect is no longer fit to drive or operate a vehicle?
11. When will our representatives at Westminster from all parties stop using the NHS as a political football and act collectively in the interests of the general public. In other words why won't all parties commit to a Royal Commission to analyse the NHS's obvious structural, organisational and financial problems and make recommendations for creating a body that is fit for purpose in delivering modern health services and social care?
12. Several companies providing domiciliary and residential care for older people have been struggling financially after many local authorities reacted to a squeeze on budgets by cutting the fees that they pay for care and raising the thresholds that elderly people must meet to qualify for care funding. What is the government doing to ensure that that LA's have sufficient funds for such care?
13. My wife is in a nursing home, having been diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2011. She was self-funding for the first year and parted with £60,000+. West Sussex took over in March 2017 with me contributing a weekly top-up of £100. The Conservative party was promising a cap on the amount people must pay towards care home fees. What has happened about that after the Chancellor of the Exchequer dropped the promise?

14. Can the Government ensure that there are telephone helplines for all Government departments (and essential services) i.e. HMRC, to be able to pay a bill on the telephone for those that cannot use a computer and pay online? Mary Radford

15. Local branches of national banks are closing at an ever-increasing rate leaving our local villages without banking services i.e. Billingshurst where Santander closed 5 years ago, Barclays closed November 2017, Lloyds closed 16th May 2018 & Natwest Bank 30th May 18. Do our national banks owe the public a moral duty, in the wider public interest, to provide an accessible local banking service? The back stop is the local Post Offices which have also seen a steady decline in recent years and are often too small to provide an efficient service. Keith Barraclough

16. There are large housing developments being (i.e. Wickhurst Green, Highwood) or going to be built (North of Horsham) in the District. Developers promise infrastructure i.e. schools, GP surgeries, railway stations and affordable housing but are apparently able to get around supplying that. Also, where are the trained support workers (i.e. teachers, police, fire, ambulance, nurses, local authority staff etc. etc.) expected to come from and be able to afford to live?

17. Could the next election be won or lost on the social media platform, as it appears that if a 'thought' grabs the public mood, it can motivate/influence persons state of mind - especially, it seems the younger person?'

18. Mobility scooters, wheelchairs, visually impaired are frequently hampered by vehicles parked either partially or completely blocking the footpath. Action to fine such motorists is no longer in the hands of the police and getting worse. With the advent of electric vehicles and the need to plug them into an electric socket, this pavement obstruction will get worse. Will the government reconsider creating new simple offences with greater enforcement powers to the police and local authorities? What happened following the 10th February 2016 [Briefing Paper](#) 'Pavement and on-street parking in England'?

19. Should people who have reached state retirement age but still working, continue to pay NI contributions to help pay for social care? Terry Slade

20. There are very few jobs with large employers in Horsham or the surrounding district anymore. This has led to people travelling long distances to find work. Where are the jobs going to come from for our young people/ relatives? Vanessa Jones

21. A particular aspect of transport for older people that concerns us is the far from easy journey by public transport to East Surrey Hospital, involving either train/bus (approx. 1 hour) or bus/bus (approx. 1hour 40 minutes) My question is, does Mr Quin agree that these timings are unacceptable for older and sometimes frail people, especially as a change is involved on either route. If he does, would he support a campaign for a direct service from Horsham even if a modest charge was involved?

22. Older people like having easy access to toilets - fear of not being able to use facilities can frighten people into being housebound and more isolated. While Billingshurst has a public facility most rural villages do not. Can you provide any relief (practical solutions) to the problem?

23. Why does the government's planning framework not require more accessible home building i.e. bungalows to facilitate older people downsizing?