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There is no mandate for a hard, destructive Brexit

The Government have opted for a hard, destructive Brexit, with no mandate to do so. They have made political decisions to take the hardest of hard lines on immigration and the European Court of Justice; to take us out of the Single Market and the Customs Union while pretending we can enjoy the 'exact same benefits'; to squander good will among EU leaders and instead put all our eggs in the basket of a special relationship with Donald Trump. The Government have made a choice. This was not an inevitability.

However, it is often claimed that the Government's decision is the logical consequence of the result on June 23rd 2016; that the Leave campaign pledged to remove the UK from the Single Market; that migration trumps all else; in short, that the Government has a mandate to pursue this path. Open Britain do not believe that is the case.

Key arguments: why there is no mandate

- ***Leave campaigners' promises cannot be trusted.*** It is selective to choose certain statements from Leave campaigners. If there was a mandate for everything Vote Leave said, where is that £350m a week for the NHS? Where is the VAT cut on fuel? Where is the Points Based System for immigration? The Leave campaign knew these promises were false and yet still made them.
- ***Leave campaigners said trade would not be affected and the Government are continuing the deception; it is up to them to provide some evidence.*** Some Leave campaigners said we would leave the Single Market, but they also promised that trade with Europe would continue "uninterrupted". David Davis has said that the Government will negotiate a Free Trade Agreement that will deliver the "exact same benefits" as we have today. That is simply not possible outside of the Single Market. Until someone can provide actual evidence to the contrary it remains the case that trade with the EU can only be as free as it is today as a non-EU Member State, as the UK will be, from within the Single Market. And until that point any claims of a mandate for leaving the Single Market are hollow because they never once spelled out what the real consequences are.
- ***There is and never has been agreement on what 'Leave' looks like amongst Brexit campaigners.*** Some Leave campaigners said we would leave the Single Market, others didn't. High-profile Leave campaigners from Arron Banks to Daniel Hannan to Owen Paterson all praised the Norwegian model during the campaign. Norway is not in the EU but is in the Single Market. Indeed, before the referendum campaign, Boris Johnson had always been an outspoken supporter of Single Market membership.
- ***All party manifestos committed to membership of the Single Market.*** The Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat manifestos all understood the importance of membership of the Single Market, which is why they committed to staying in it.¹ With no coherent alternative offered during the campaign, these positions are the only positions for which there is a democratic mandate.
- ***Polling shows the public want Single Market membership; there is no mandate to harm the economy in the name of migration control.*** When asked the question about which is more

¹ Conservative Party manifesto 2015, p.72; Labour Party manifesto 2015, p.77; Liberal Democrat manifesto 2015, p.33.

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important, free trade deals with the EU or significant immigration controls, the public have consistently opted for the former.² Indeed, when asked straight whether they wanted to stay in or leave the Single Market, a clear majority favour staying in it.³

- **Remain campaigners, including the then Prime Minister and Chancellor, warned of the dangers of leaving the Single Market.** Remain campaigners were right to warn that leaving the Single Market would be a disaster; these dangers still very much exist today. Some Leave campaigners said we would leave the Single Market but that trade with the EU will continue interrupted. Until they can demonstrate that the promises they made on trade will be honoured, we will continue to argue that Single Market membership is the best thing for our economy and that there is no mandate to leave it.

Background information

Immigration: a complex result

Public attitudes on immigration are more complex than many suggest, and there is little evidence that the public would be prepared to be poorer in order to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands.

Much research has sought to find a link between immigration and voting to Leave. The LSE⁴ didn't find evidence that a large number of EU migrants locally drove a vote to Leave. In fact, looking at the 20 places where there were the most EU migrants they found 18 voted to Remain, while of the 20 areas with the fewest 15 were won by the Leave campaign. Looking across the country they found the Leave vote was negatively related to the proportion of EU migrants in a population.

What they did find however was the recent influxes of migrants did appear to have had an impact. Looking at changes in the past 10 years they found that places where there has been a rise in EU migration were more likely to have voted to leave. The LSE states: "areas with relatively high levels of EU migration tended to be more pro-remain; those places which had experienced a sudden influx of EU migrants over the last 10 years tended to be more pro-Leave."⁵

A similar result was found by the Resolution Foundation,⁶ who showed that it was changes in the level of migration of last decade that had a significant impact on the leave vote, rather than the overall level.

However, there is a clear desire for a greater degree of 'control'. Research done by ICM for British Future found 74% agreeing with a statement that immigration "brings pressures as well as gains" and that we need to "manage immigration so we control who comes here but still keep the immigration that's good for our economy and society".

British Future has also found that nearly half the public (48%) thought that politicians were scared to talk about immigration for fear of offending sensibilities during the campaign, rising to 63% of Leave voters.⁷ This ties in with research from GQR which shows that, while immigration was not seen by

² <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/british-people-want-a-soft-brexite-putting-the-economy-ahead-of-cutting-immigration-poll-a7363336.html>

³ http://www.open-britain.co.uk/new_poll_reveals_public_support_for_single_market_membership

⁴ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/brexit-and-the-left-behind-thesis/>

⁵ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/brexit-and-the-left-behind-thesis/>

⁶ <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/media/blog/why-did-we-vote-to-leave-what-an-analysis-of-place-can-tell-us-about-brexit/>

⁷ <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Disbanding-the-tribes-report-July-2016.pdf>

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remain voters as one of the top three issues in determining their vote (11% of remain voters compared to 72% of leave voters) they still held concerns. Asking people whether they thought it was 'essential for the immigration system to reduce the number of migrants coming in to Britain', 44% of remain voters agreed, with less than half that number, 20%, saying they disagreed.⁸ This strong net-agreement that immigration should be brought down was seen across age and socio-economic groups.

Therefore, concerns over immigration have to be confronted, but there is no clear policy solution that can be reached simply by looking at the referendum result. A policy focused on overall numbers remains as questionable as it was before the vote. There is, however, a correlation between the areas that voted Leave and recent largescale local migrant influxes, suggesting that honouring the concerns of those who voted Leave may mean focusing on alleviating the local impacts of such influxes.

Economy still a priority: a balance must be found

A common perception is that many of the people who voted to leave feel that they have not felt the gains of globalisation. Lord Ashcroft's pollings⁹ lends weight to this view, finding a majority of leave voters, by 61% to 39%, thought that "for most children growing up in Britain today, life will be worse than it was for their parents", and by 58% to 42% that "overall, life in Britain today is worse than it was 30 years ago". In contrast remain voters were more optimistic on both these questions, although it is worth noting on the question of whether the way the economy and society are changing would mean more threats than opportunities to their standard of living both remain and leave voters thought that the threats were greater than the opportunities, with a much smaller majority amongst the remain voters.

A number of analyses have found significant effects on leave votes from different economic variables, providing support for this view. The Resolution Foundation regression analysis singled out the employment rate, finding a 10ppt increase in it was associated with a 1.7ppt reduction in the leave vote of an area. Looking at wages they also found a negative correlation between median pay in an area and the vote to leave.¹⁰

Other studies have also suggested deindustrialisation was a driving force behind the leave vote. Analysis done for the Washington Post¹¹ concluded that the vote to leave was higher in areas that had been more affected by competition from Chinese imports as a result of globalisation. This is supported by British Future's analysis¹² of how particular areas voted, where they found that areas in England and Wales where traditional extractive and manufacturing industries voted to leave. This matches with the socio-economic split in the vote, which showed the more affluent groups much more inclined to remain, particularly than those in the C2DE groups who were strongly in favour of leaving.¹³

While this evidence looked at so far supports the view that economic malaise played an important role in the leave vote it is important to also note that, counter-intuitively, the Resolution

⁸ <https://gqrr.app.box.com/s/8fryc6auj1y9x3f5syp6hrwqep2xz45l>

⁹ <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>

¹⁰ <http://www.slideshare.net/ResolutionFoundation/the-importance-of-place-64063692>

¹¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/07/07/the-real-reason-the-u-k-voted-for-brexiteconomics-not-identity/>

¹² <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Disbanding-the-tribes-report.July-2016.pdf>

¹³ <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>

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Foundation¹⁴ found homeownership was positively correlated with voting to leave – with a 10ppts rise in the homeowner population corresponding to a 4.4ppts rise in the leave vote.

This does suggest, therefore, that honouring the Leave vote also means confronting their economic concerns and increasing opportunity in Leave areas, something that is incompatible with leaving the single market.

Leave campaigners' promises

- **£350m a week for the NHS.** The most infamous claim made by Vote Leave – “let’s give our NHS the £350m the EU takes every week.”¹⁵
- **Cut VAT on fuel.** “A special Finance Bill. This would abolish the 5% rate of VAT on household energy bills by the date of the next general election by amending the Value Added Tax Act 1994, and will be a major benefit for low income households. This will be paid for by savings from the UK’s contributions to the EU budget.”¹⁶
- **A points-based immigration system.** “Asylum and Immigration Control Bill...The Bill would end the discrimination against non-EU citizens and create a genuine points-based immigration system in which the possession of suitable skills is a key element.”¹⁷
- A full list of the top 38 promises made by the Leave campaign is available on the Open Britain website [here](#).

Leave campaigners' deception on trade

Some Leave campaigners and Government Ministers say that they want to leave the Single Market and that trade with the EU will remain unchanged. That is impossible unless we retain membership of the Single Market. Their claims of a mandate are therefore hollow as they never spelled out the consequences. Indeed, they have continued to peddle the deception in government.

- **David Davis** has said “the idea of a comprehensive free trade agreement and a comprehensive customs agreement that will deliver the exact same benefits as we have.”¹⁸
- **David Davis** said businesses would “ensure that trade with Britain continues uninterrupted” and that “trade will almost certainly continue with the EU on similar to current circumstances.”¹⁹
- **Boris Johnson** said “there will continue to be free trade.”²⁰

¹⁴ <http://www.slideshare.net/ResolutionFoundation/the-importance-of-place-64063692>

¹⁵ <http://www.eu-facts.org.uk/arguments-by-topic/would-we-have-350-million-to-spend-on-the-nhs-if-we-vote-leave/>

¹⁶ Vote Leave press release, 15 June 2016:

<http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/a-framework-for-taking-back-control-and-establishing-a-new-uk-eu-deal-after-23-june.html>

¹⁷ Vote Leave press release, 15 June 2016:

<http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/a-framework-for-taking-back-control-and-establishing-a-new-uk-eu-deal-after-23-june.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2017-01-24a.161.0&s=same+benefits+speaker%3A10162#g169.2>

¹⁹ <http://www.daviddavismp.com/david-davis-gives-a-speech-making-the-case-for-brexite/>

²⁰ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/26/i-cannot-stress-too-much-that-britain-is-part-of-europe--and-alw/>

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- **Michael Gove** said “it should be win-win for us and it will be if we vote to leave and we can maintain free trade, stop sending money and also have control of our borders.”²¹
- **Vote Leave** stated that “the idea that our trade will suffer...is silly.”²²
- **Liam Fox** has said that he envisages “at least as free a trading environment as we have today.”²³
- **Theresa May** consistently uses the line that she wants to give companies “maximum freedom to trade with and operate in the Single Market.”²⁴
- **Philip Hammond** has said that people did not vote “to become poorer.”²⁵

Leave campaigners can't agree amongst themselves

- Before the referendum, **Boris Johnson** said: “I'd vote to stay in the Single Market. I'm in favour of the Single Market. I want us to trade freely with our European friends and partners.”²⁶
- **Nigel Farage** lauded Norway when writing in the Daily Express, saying “European countries outside the EU like Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are currently thriving because they are not encumbered by Euro bailout costs, and extortionate EU membership fees. They are confident nations grasping the opportunities that a global perspective presents.”²⁷
- **Owen Paterson** called the ‘Norway option’, “the only realistic option.” He said – “this brings us to the only realistic option, which is to stay within the EEA agreement. The EEA is tailor made for this purpose and can be adopted by joining EFTA first. This becomes the Norway option.”²⁸
- **Douglas Carswell** said that “given that Norway's per capita GDP is considerably higher than ours, and that Norway manages to do far more trade with the EU from outside than we do from within, I can think of worse things than being like Norway.”²⁹
- **Daniel Hannan** cited Norway as “a handy example of how a country can prosper by having a free-trade relationship with the EU instead of joining the Brussels political institutions.”³⁰

²¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36241812>

²² http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/briefing_newdeal.html

²³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37504966>

²⁴ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-conference-speech-article-50-brexiteu-a7341926.html>

²⁵ <http://news.sky.com/story/philip-hammond-spells-out-plans-to-tackle-brexiteu-turbulence-10604388>

²⁶ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/eu-referendum-boris-johnson-brexiteu-support-single-market-leave-european-union-video-a7089991.html>

²⁷ <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/591988/Nigel-Farage-EU-European-Union-Ukip>

²⁸ <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2014/11/is-owen-paterson-hoping-to-become-leader-of-the-out-camp-in-the-2017-referendum/>

²⁹ <http://www.talkcarswell.com/home/after-the-eu/2478>

³⁰ <http://www.hannan.co.uk/how-norway-beats-the-eu/>