



For the past 8 years I have represented the Liberal Democrat party in the area in which I live in the UK as a District Councillor. My role involves ensuring vital services are maintained such as waste collection and maximising waste recycling and reuse rates, street cleanliness, housing support, health, planning policy and approvals, licencing of taxi's and the purveyors of alcoholic beverages and the provision of sporting facilities in the region.

I have always considered myself European and was appalled at the result of the UK referendum in June 2016. Since then our Conservative government have failed to achieve any consensus within the UK, within Parliament or indeed within their own political party for what Brexit should look like.

After 2 years of rhetoric we seem no closer to reaching an agreement.

The next few months will determine the future of the UK for decades to come. It is a worrying time.

The country was split 48% remain to 52% leave. The population are polarised into two camps. The electorate were fed with false promises by the leave campaign – who were funded by rich investors, some of whom made vast sums by hedging against the pound at this time.

They created the myth that unfettered EU immigration was the source of all wrong in the UK.

The Conservative Government at the time were clouded by a false sense of security that the UK would vote to maintain the status quo by remaining in the UK. Their complacency during the campaign coupled with the Leave false promise that huge sums of money would be invested back into the British economy if we left the EU influenced people to vote to leave the UK.

In short, the leave campaign was based on falsehoods.

Many right-wing politicians are now calling for a 'hard brexit' where the UK just walks away without any deals agreed with the EU. They are convinced that the UK will prosper. Economic analysis takes the opposite view.

United Kingdom Liberal Democrats passionately believe that Britain is stronger as part of the European Union. We have led the fight to give the people the final say on the Brexit deal, with the option to remain in the EU. We acknowledge the result of the 2016 referendum, which gave the government a mandate to start negotiations to leave – **but** we believe the final decision should be made by the British people, not by politicians. The peoples vote!

The Liberal Democrats are fighting to keep the UK inside the EU, including the single market and customs union - trade must continue without damaging customs controls at the border.

Liberal Democrats are open and outward-looking. We passionately believe that Britain's relationship with its neighbours is stronger as part of the European Union. Whatever its imperfections, the EU remains the best framework for working effectively and co-operating in the pursuit of our shared aims. It has led directly to greater prosperity, increased trade, investment and jobs, better security, and a greener environment. Britain is better off in the EU.

Liberal Democrats campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU. However, we acknowledge the result of the 2016 referendum, which gave the Government a mandate to start negotiations to leave. The

decision Britain took, though, was simply whether to remain in or to leave the European Union. There was no option on the ballot paper to choose the shape of our future relationship with the EU on vital issues including trade, travel or security.

While much remains uncertain about Theresa May's approach, it is now clear that the UK right wing Conservatives are campaigning for a Hard Brexit. This means leaving the Single Market, ending freedom of movement, and abandoning the Customs Union – even though these choices will make the UK poorer and disappoint many leave voters who wanted a different outcome.

The effects of Brexit are already being felt. The value of the pound has plummeted. Inflation has risen. Growth in the economy has slowed, and the government is already borrowing billions more to fill the gap in lost tax revenue. Young people, who voted overwhelmingly to remain, are being told their voices do not matter. Urgent problems, such as the future of the NHS, are being neglected because of the sheer scale of the challenge posed by Brexit.

A Hard Brexit will make all these problems worse. It is the wrong choice for the country. Liberal Democrats will fight to prevent a Hard Brexit.

At the end of negotiations, there will be a decision on the deal. The Conservatives want the decision to be taken by politicians. Liberal Democrats believe the British people should have the final say.

That's why, when the terms of our future relationship with the EU have been negotiated, we will put that deal to a vote of the British people in a referendum, with the alternative option of staying in the EU on the ballot paper. We continue to believe that there is no deal as good for the UK outside the EU as the one it already has as a member.