

Everywhere I go, whether it is the pub, supermarket, organised events, canvassing, church, farmers market or just around to friends and family for a cuppa, I love to hear what is on everyone's mind. I don't want to become an MP absorbed by the Westminster bubble with no real understanding of what local people think. One issue that is certain to come up is immigration and the pending entry of Bulgarian and Romanians into the UK.

As regular readers know I am not necessarily a finger-pointing yaa-boo punch and judy style politician, but on this issue the last Labour Government's policy of mass uncontrolled immigration has caused nothing but trouble. In 2004 when Labour took the disastrous decision to be the only European economy not to place transitional controls on migrants coming to the UK, the consequences on local communities were totally underestimated.

I have signed an amendment in Parliament calling for the Government to defy the European Courts by extending restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian nationals from coming to the UK. I believe fear over any repercussions emanating from the European Courts are over-exaggerated and the slow pace of Brussels means that any action followed by an inevitably long case would give our communities a welcome reprieve.

Temporarily blocking the migrants from Romania and Bulgaria is usually presented by opponents as being anti-immigrant. On the contrary; immigration can and has in the past brought real benefits to the country. However uncontrolled migration from Eastern European countries has not necessarily had the same effect, causing real concerns within our communities.

The PM is advocating an extension to the period that EU migrants need to spend in the UK before they can tap into our generous welfare system. I think at a time of financial constraint we should go further and extend the restrictions altogether and if the EU don't like it, then they know what they can do...