



Political Notebook by George Pascoe-Watson

David Cameron is in no mood to bow to troublemaking Conservative MPs, new or old.

That's the message from number 10 as the new PM kicks Tory pledges into the long grass, never to be seen again.

Downing Street are making it clear Mr Cameron will stand up to disgruntled backbenchers.

They point out the PM has more than enough credit in the bank to see off his critics.

He delivered them power, gained 100 extra seats in the general election, delivered two historic by-election victories and ensured the largest number of Conservative councillors in town halls for a generation.

Mr Cameron is acutely aware there is unrest on his backbenches including some of his new intake who owe their seats to him.

His decision to change the format of the 1922 backbench committee of Tory MPs sent shockwaves through his party.

It was Mr Cameron's "clause four moment" - resembling the time when Tony Blair ditched a hugely sentimental part of Labour's manifesto as a challenge to the party's left.

The PM's move to dilute his backbench committee's power was incredibly brave and could only have been executed in his first weeks as Premier.

Many of the 118 Conservative who voted against the move - in vain - are new girls and boys, showing not all will be plain sailing as he puts manifesto policies out to grass under pressure from Nick Clegg.

An amazing 34 policies have been put to consultation which, as anyone knows, means they will probably never see the light of day.

A list of policy pledges previously regarded as meat and drink to the Tories are now history.

They include ripping up the Human Rights Act, tax breaks for marriage, a tax on non-doms to pay for inheritance tax changes, tougher jail sentences, curbs on fuel duty rises, and stamp duty cuts for first time buyers.

Even the Daily Mail and The Sun have been critical.

Yet Mr Cameron is bullish and in no mood to back down. He insists coalition government means everyone must make compromises. He has made his choice and there will be no u-turns.

The future success of the coalition government will depend in large part on his relationship with Mr Clegg.

The early signs are good. But division or rancour between the PM and his deputy will almost certainly spell the end.

They must stick together like glue which will not be easy as the pressure mounts over policy and direction.



But to list only those policies which have effectively been dumped would be to tell only half the story.

The government's action points published on Thursday are the most comprehensive I have seen in 15 years at the heart of Westminster.

They are clear, concise and are surprisingly waffle-free.

So we see the cap on immigration promised by the Tories, significant changes to the welfare system building on that

already put in place by James Purnell when he was secretary of state.

International Development secretary Andrew Mitchell has made an early start scrapping payments to cultural groups based in the UK.

Aid money will be targeted only on the world's poorest nations.

Chancellor George Osborne's debut in Brussels also bears some analysis.

He decided against trying to unpick EU hedge fund rules and returned with plaudits from fellow finance ministers and deftly escaped a kicking from The City to boot.

The Royal Mail will soon be put up for part privatization, a policy Peter Mandelson tried but ducked when Labour's power began to evaporate.

Aviation tax will change so that carriers will be charged for the plane rather than the passenger - a controversial move which could cripple some regional carriers and hit BA with extra costs.

This will take some time to be drawn up because the unforeseen consequences of such a policy could be costly to British industry.

There will be major change to the NHS and to schools.

Doctors will have to pass tough language tests before landing NHS contracts.

GPs will come under severe pressure to renegotiate their contracts forcing them to do out-of-hours work.

And they'll have to register any patient who applies.

More faith schools will open and it'll be much easier for new providers - private firms, parents' groups, charities - to set up new schools at taxpayer expense.

But crucially, Mr Cameron has won his way on reducing the deficit.

To most, this was the biggest and most important test of his authority.

All else pales in relation to the need to sort out Britain's finances.

Mr Cameron knows he must act swiftly with a new Labour leader due to take office at the end of September.

The summer months in politics come and go very quickly and before he knows it, one of the Miliband brothers will be leading Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

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