

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 7:22 pm

To continue the Singapore-on-Thames theme of the last few days, [the Guardian had an article yesterday](#) that, it transpired, was pretty much dominated by my opinions on this issue.

The initial focus was in Dyson. I won't replicate what was said there. I will warn that the comments simplify some of the technicalities, necessarily. They are however appropriate and fair.

The real key issue was, however, this:

Singapore's fiscal system has been lauded by a number of senior Tories and business leaders who have been promoting Brexit. Both Theresa May and Philip Hammond have threatened to turn the UK into a low-tax economy —[the Singapore of the west](#) — if a deal with the EU cannot be found. Jacob Rees-Mogg's investment firm, Somerset Capital, has operations in Singapore as well as the Cayman Islands tax haven.

But Murphy said it would be hard for the UK to replicate the Singapore model. "More than 80% of people live in government-owned housing so it does not need to tax people, it just charges rent. And many of its largest companies are also state-owned so, again, local taxes on profits do not matter as much as they do in the UK, because the government gets a large chunk of local profits anyway. It can offer low taxes and not have its revenues threatened. This is fundamentally different to the UK, where the government is dependent on tax."

And that means Singapore-on-Thames is not possible. Tory lead Britain can not replicate what looks very much like the socialist economic infrastructure of Singapore. In that case those who think this is the model to copy are wrong: not only can't we copy it, the conditions that make it appear desirable are ones no one in the UK is likely to want to replicate. Singapore-on-Thames is, then, just another Tory delusion.