

Lord Geidt has highlighted the absence of ethics in No....

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I am not sure that the No.10 ethics adviser, Lord Geidt, intended to yesterday set himself up as the person to bring Johnson down, but it seems he might be just have done that. His challenge to Johnson, in which he asked how Johnson's fixed penalty notice could be considered compliant with the Ministerial Code of Conduct was appropriate.

Johnson, of course, ducked and weaved in response. Effectively he said this was none of Geidt's business. In his own mind, no doubt, Johnson thinks his recent gutting of the Code is in any case retrospective.

It is thought possible Geidt will resign as a result of the difference of view. Whether he does, or not, matters little. What Geidt has already successfully signalled is that even in No.10 there are people questioning Johnson's fitness for Office. More MPs are likely to send letters calling for a change of Tory leader as a result. Johnson might face a confidence vote as early as next week.

The widespread feeling is that Johnson will win that vote. It is presumed that the 140 MPs holding some position in government will vote for him. He only needs 180 to win. But he will be seriously damaged by the vote. If he goes to the next election having suffered such a blow his chances of winning are very low. No leader can win the country when their own party has expressed serious doubts about him.

But, what then? Lord Geidt, as ethics adviser, offered no clue. Nor will anyone else. We would be in limbo, facing multiple challenges, with a prime minister intent on wreaking havoc and no mechanism, barring an unlikely Opposition win in a no confidence vote in the Commons, to stop him.

If evidence was needed that we need constitutional reform, this is it.

If evidence was also needed that it is the time for the Opposition to say what that reform might be then this is also it.

But Labour considers to dither, its one big idea in the form of the windfall tax now

stripped from it.

Even when discussion on this issue of constitutional reform is the one big thing that it can contribute to the growing debate on the Union in Scotland, it still can't say what it thinks.

Keir Starmer, Lisa Nandy and Wes Streeting are all, apparently, writing books right now. It's hard to imagine what they might be saying. I hope there is more substance to their arguments than current political debate suggests.

As we enter a long weekend of rather uncomfortable wallowing in nostalgia, which would appear to be what we are now best at as a result of too much time under Tory governments, it would be good to think that someone in Westminster other than Caroline Lucas and the SNP knew what they wanted. But in the other, largely English and Welsh parties that thinking is hard to discern.

Lord Geidt correctly spotted an absence of ethics yesterday. Tory MPs could, if they wish, address that issue. The absence of ideas looks as if it will be harder to solve.