

## Budget messaging

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I was on LBC radio yesterday, talking about this week's budget .

At 9 am this morning I will be on Nicky Campbell's show on BBC Radio 5 discussing the same theme. I suspect I will be on a number of times between nine and 10 .

I am already booked to do my usual immediate post-budget commentary at about 1:30 pm on the Jeremy Vine programme on BBC Radio 2 on Wednesday .

Who knows, other things might also happen .

What we do know is that until Jeremy Hunt ends his speech on Wednesday, anything that can be said will be speculation. Much of that will also, because of the focus of the mainstream media, be on things that really do not matter.

When doing a pre-interview this morning, I suggested that tax cuts, whether to income tax or national insurance, might come at about 78th on my list of priorities with regards to this budget . The things that I said that were more important included, the fact that our economy is in a mess, public services are crumbling, our national infrastructure is literally falling apart, and that maybe 5 million people in the UK missed a meal in the last month because of poverty. We also have millions of people out of work because they are too unwell to take a job. Simultaneously, the NHS is crying out for more people, whilst social care is in peril because of a lack of funding and local authorities going bankrupt. In that situation to think that tax cuts, most of the benefit of which will always goes to those who are best off, are what this country needs is to grossly misread this country's priorities at this moment.

The reality is that this country needs three things.

The first is more government spending because nothing else will create growth.

The second is more investment.

The third is more taxation of wealth to correct for the inflationary impact that these first

two proposals might create and to tackle inequality.

If I was to highlight where the money was to go, it would be on the NHS, social care, supporting local authorities, settling public sector pay claims, and removing the deliberate poverty created by successive government over the last 14 years, whether that be by the creation of the two-child benefit co, or by restrictions on disability benefits, or the bedroom tax, and so much else.

What I would add is that all of this is possible. The [Taxing Wealth Report shows how](#).

It is time for a rethink on our economy. Unless we do that we will forever be stuck in the dire space that we find ourselves in.