

Welcome to my home town North London. Just to orientate yourself from here on a sunny day you can see the Emirates and White Hart Lane. On a really gloomy day you can see the Ministry of Justice in Petit France. A building so splendid in design that when I visited our paymasters, the other day I was struck how you could save the £24 million from crown court advocacy by simply having a slightly less extravagant piece of sculpture in the entrance hall.

Lets make sure we use the government figures

The first figure to make sure we get out there . The Ministry of Justice want to save £24m from Crown Court advocacy. They are decimating the criminal justice system for £24 million.

The second figure is that the cuts to the criminal bar come on top of 40% cuts since 1997.

No profession has ever been treated with such contempt . Doctors, teachers, nurses.

The third figure is the average earnings of a criminal barrister. According to the Minister it is £40k before expenses. He told me he knows of barristers earning £28k.

He cares, but not enough to do anything about it.

He writes in Sunday Mail on need to toughen up on knife crime, but with criminal lawyers leaving the profession, who is going to be able to prosecute or defend these cases

I am now part of a profession that is approaching breaking point and for £24 million.

Every week I am written to by criminal barristers leaving the bar. Women going on maternity leave, unable to return. This week Took's Court a necessary part of our English Legal System, going to the wall.

You know that I've taken over at a quiet time. Within a week we'd issued Judicial Review proceedings against QASA and we went and delivered our intent personally to the Lord Chancellor and have telegraphed the fact we are weeks away from action. In fact I haven't telegraphed it, but I did guardian it earlier and will Times it in an interview Frances Gibb has asked for.

So the message is don't underestimate our resolve. AND the government does. Which is their main hope that they can ride this out.

They do not believe that with mortgages to pay our members will defy the proposed cuts. It was one of the less edifying observations of the Ministry of Justice when I met him. That we cannot afford to stand up to these cuts. Our members can't afford not to stand up for them.

I have no doubt at all we will stand up to these cuts. I have no doubt that is what the members are indicating they want to do.

Day after day we stand up to advocate with passion and belief in the face of bad odds and In those cases we don't know where truth lies . In this case we do. We know that Justice and right is on our side.

Talking about right and justice, I saw Tom De La Mare last night one of the silks acting for the CBA in its JR case . He does look remarkably like Clarke Kent, which filled me with enormous confidence

Why would government doubt that we will be resolved in this fight. Here we know what is true and we know what is right and we will go steadfast in that direction. No double talk a straight pledge. This is what we'll do.

We are in the middle of Chris Grayling's consultation period.

On Monday I announced we are holding our own Consultation period .

His consultation is gracious enough to ask us to choose the way we would like to go out of business.

Our consultation period will devise the way we will defeat these cuts

So what is our CONSULTATION ?

- i. It seeks to confirm the mood and intention of the criminal bar.

We must do that , although I think we know exactly what that mood is.

The mood is for “action” in Not accepting cuts.

And that is what we will deliver.

We have our finger on the pulse of the bar. Our executive consists of Lords , (well one Lord ,)Ladies and Gentlemen. From within them we have an Action Group of 15 people. That will be the group that steers the will of the bar.

But to do it we must have UNITY.

Unity between the Bar and Solicitors achieved the reversal of PCT. The Lord Chancellor didn't give it up as a concession. He was made to see it would not work.

We expect nothing less than complete backing from the solicitors' profession in word and deed to ensure NOT A PENNY MORE in cuts

We expect a proper fee for the work we do. If briefs are returned or not undertaken by members of the Bar, we expect that they will not be picked up by

solicitors. We expect that they will honour the pledge made many months ago to support each other..

This is about honour. We pledged to stand together on PCT; QASA and More Cuts the unholy trinity.

I truly believe we can win on all three fronts, but not with lip service.

This week's Law Society Gazette contains an article by Christine Braski,

It has 3 quotes:

The CBA . Pledges action within weeks.

Bill Waddington. Taking the correct step of proving by figures cuts are unnecessary.

The Law Society as to what they are doing.

This only works if we all contribute to each others fight.

It is true there is more than one way to skin a cat, but you do have to take the cat by the scruff of the neck in order to skin it

I mentioned White Hart Lane and Emirates, in which I have not a jot of interest, but I do have a lifelong love of Brisbane Road, the home of the mighty O's. This season Leyton Orient have won 8 of their first 9 games. This is the season for wonders. (Although it so happens that I am most concerned about Wolverhampton" Wonderers.)

I have to say I have heard once or twice the observation "cuts are inevitable". I am appalled that some might be prepared to see our fellow lawyers go under without a fight. Defending against injustice is what we pledge to do.

I am truly sure we can defeat these cuts. Enough is enough . Not a penny More.