

PLEASE NOTE "THE ANDREW MARR SHOW" MUST BE CREDITED IF ANY PART OF THIS TRANSCRIPT IS USED

N.B: An editorial note appears at the end of this transcript detailing a mistake made by Andrew Marr when he erroneously referred to 'Tatton council'. Please see below for clarification.

THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

DAVID CAMERON, MP

PRIME MINISTER

JANUARY 4th 2015

Headlines;

- **The Prime Minister defended Conservative plans which he said meant cutting spending by government departments by a further £13 billion and reducing welfare spending by £12 billion.**
- **He said "We have four months in this year to save Britain's economic recovery"**
- **Mr Cameron confirmed that his promised in/out referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union would take place by the end of 2017 at the latest - although it could be brought forward; he said he would be "delighted" if negotiations with Brussels could be completed earlier.**

ANDREW MARR

Britain's first fixed-term Parliament is now coming to an end, a lot of people said you couldn't be Prime Minister all the way through, the coalition wouldn't hold together, it, you have been and it has, but we are now going into uncharted territory, and I want to talk to you a little bit about the prospects for the five years ahead, if I could. Now, as you know, the OBR and following them the IFS have put forward detailed figures about the spending cuts you proposed, and I want to start off by asking you whether those figures are, as far as you're aware, accurate. So the Office of Budget Responsibility says that over the ten-year period, 40% of the cuts have been achieved and 60% are still to come, is that about right?

DAVID CAMERON

Those figures aren't actually correct, because they're not taking into account actually what we've already said we'd do for 2015-16, but we've been very frank and there's no, er, disguising it, there are difficult decisions that lie ahead, and let me be clear, because I really want to get the figures across to you and to your viewers today. We've said there's another 30 billion of adjustments that needs to be made, some from tax and the rest from spending, and unlike other parties we've been very clear where that money is coming from. We've said five of the 30 billion comes from continuing the war against tax evasion and tax avoidance, that leaves 25 billion, of which 12 billion should be reductions in welfare spending and we've already given some answers there, and the remaining 13 billion, that comes from, from continuing for two more years, the reductions and efficiencies in departmental spending, in government departments, along the same lines as what we've achieved in the last five years. Now, that is difficult, that will take long-term decisions, but it's not impossible, it's doable, and here's the point I really want to make, why do we need to do this? It is not some ideological obsession, it's not because we're desiccated accountants, it's because, I think it's right for our country, it's right for future generations, that at the end of seven years of economic growth, by 2018, we should start not to be borrowing but to be putting aside money for a rainy day, to be saving money for when storms in the future might hit, that is right for our country, it's right for future generations...

ANDREW MARR

I'm interested in the figure you just gave me, the 30 billion or so, because that is much less than the OBR and the IFS, who are working on official figures at the time of the autumn statement, suggested, they were talking about 55 billion of cuts still to come. Why did the

autumn statement give the impression therefore that there were much bigger cuts than you are now telling us?

DAVID CAMERON

No, no, what I was saying is there's the 30 billion that needs to be achieved, and then after that the view of the Conservative Party is that we should grow public spending but no faster than inflation, and by doing that we can make sure that before the end of the Parliament we're not borrowing money, but we're putting aside money for a rainy day, now I think every family in the country, let me just make this point, I think every family in the country will understand this, look, we all have debts and the country has debts and every year so far we've been adding to those debts, the deficit's come down, we've cut it in half, as a share of GDP, but there should be a time when you're not adding to your debts, but there should be some years when you're starting to pay down your debts, and that is what we're proposing, it is moderate, it is sensible, it is reasonable, it's the alternative that frightens me and it genuinely does frighten me...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Well, let's not get onto the alternative just yet...

DAVID CAMERON

(continues)... of Labour and the Liberal Democrats who want to go on borrowing year after year, never paying back any money, that frightens me for the future generations.

ANDREW MARR

Let's come, let's come to your, continue with your plans, if we may. Again, the OBR, the government's official body, talks about a 40 per cent cut in the budgets of some non-protected departments, now that's not BBC figures, that's not outside figures, that's government figures, are those figures wrong?

DAVID CAMERON

Well, those figures are right if you don't make spending reductions to welfare, and that's why we've said very clearly that it's important as well as seeking efficiencies in government departments, and we've said very clearly we'll protect the NHS, it's very precious to me, it's very precious to Britain, it's a great institution that we should be enhancing and not

undermining, and just as in this Parliament we've protected the NHS and put 13 billion pounds more into it, so we'll do the same in the next parliament.

ANDREW MARR

Will you protect the armed forces?

DAVID CAMERON

Well, look, let me make this, this is the important point. If you don't make savings in the welfare budget, and the other parties aren't planning to make savings in the welfare budget, indeed they're planning to spend more on welfare, if you don't do that, then the sort of figures that the OBR put forward, deep cuts in government departments, would take place, and here's another point, which is important, if you don't make..

ANDREW MARR

(over) Let me, let me stop...

DAVID CAMERON

(continues)... efficiencies were talking about, hold on, I'm just going to say this. If you don't make the sort of efficiencies we're talking about, the debt interest bill, the interest on your outstanding debt, goes up and up, and Labour would have an extra 13 and a half billion of that by the end of the next parliament.

ANDREW MARR

You've talked about welfare savings and actually it's very important, and particularly in-work benefits seems to be a major target for big savings. Now, before you came into office, you talked about child poverty as a moral disgrace and an economic waste, and yet according to the IFS figures, another 900,000 people are going to be subject to pov-, that kind of poverty after another five years of austerity. How do you feel about that?

DAVID CAMERON

Well, well first of all people can look at our record and actually child poverty under this government has gone down, and that is...

ANDREW MARR

The first two years only, when, that was Labour.

DAVID CAMERON

Well that, no, no, I think it's right to judge the record of this government across five years, and the fact is, we haven't solved all the country's problems but we have seen child poverty go down, and what we've seen...

ANDREW MARR

(over) First two years, honestly...

DAVID CAMERON

... as important, you know, look, how do you tackle poverty? You tackle poverty by getting more people into work, we've created 1000 jobs for every day this government has been in office, there are 1.75 million more of our countrymen and women in work at the end of this government than at the beginning.

ANDREW MARR

You're only...

DAVID CAMERON

(over) We inherited, you've got to think back to our inheritance.

ANDREW MARR

Your own minister, Esther McVey, told the House of Commons that the changes to the uprating of benefits had put 200,000 children into poverty, told that to the House of Commons at the beginning of 2013...

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I think, Andrew, if I, you're...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Since then...

DAVID CAMERON

(over)... slightly missing the point, in the end you can only tackle poverty...

ANDREW MARR

I think for the families concerned I'm not missing the point.

DAVID CAMERON

I think for every family in the country knows you can only bring people out of poverty if you create a growing economy and we started with low growth or no growth, we're now the fastest growing country in the western world, you can only create, get people out of poverty if you create jobs, we started with massive unemployment, we've seen 1.75 million more people in work, we've seen, our families facing difficulties but now you've got all those families who are in work who weren't previously in work who are able to provide for themselves and their children, we've come a huge way down the road we need to be on for a stronger economy and the real concern I have is if we turn back now, if we go back to the bad ways of more borrowing, more spending, more debt, if we listen to the people who got us into this mess in first place, we could go right back to the start and really threaten the economic recovery that's now under way in Britain.

ANDREW MARR

And that sounds in the abstract very compelling, but there are lots and lots of families up and down the country for whom this is causing real and serious pain. I'll come back to the child poverty figures, 900,000 extra people in child poverty given what's going to happen to in-work benefits, the IFS says, not us, the IFS.

DAVID CAMERON

You're, you're making this point but look, if you don't control your deficit, if you don't get your debt down, if you don't address the real problems that my generation of politicians are facing, that is when you get massive poverty, look what has happened...

ANDREW MARR

So if you say to these people it's a price worth paying...

DAVID CAMERON

No, what I say to people is that rule one of our economic plan, a plan that is working, is that you've got to get your deficit down and then after good years of economic growth you should be starting to pay down some of your debt, and people know if you don't do that, that is when you get real poverty. Look what happened in countries like Portugal and Greece, that saw their debts and their deficits go out of control.

ANDREW MARR

(over) Well they're very different economies to our own...

DAVID CAMERON

Yeah, but they, they had to cut their NHS by 16, 17 per cent. What I fear with Labour is if you have a bunch of politicians...

ANDREW MARR

(over) With respect I'd rather not...

DAVID CAMERON

(continues)... who've learnt nothing for the last five years...

ANDREW MARR

(over)... I'll talk about Labour next week.

DAVID CAMERON

(over)... but it is important because...

ANDREW MARR

(over) I know, but I will talk, I will put these points to Labour next week, but this is your turn to talk about your record.

DAVID CAMERON

(over) But if you let th-, if you really, absolutely, my, my concern is this, if you want to get families out of poverty you've got to get your debt and your deficit under control, that is line one of the long-term economic plan for our country, which is working.

ANDREW MARR

Well, let's, we've talked about children, let's go to the other end of the scale and talk about old people, because we've just seen the last few days some dramatic figures reported on the decline in meals on, in wh-, on, meals on wheels, about half the number of people getting them now than used to get them, and the price is going up, what happened to the Big Society, these are people who need a day to day contact, someone coming into their house, checking they're all right, giving them the one hot meal of the day, and that is being cut by Conservative councils, protesting about it all around the country at the moment, that is surely not the compassionate Conservatism that you used to espouse?

DAVID CAMERON

I am a compassionate Conservative and com-, and compassion isn't just measured in the money that you spend, compassion is measured in creating a growing economy so you can have the stronger NHS, the stronger social services, you can't protect elderly people unless you have a growing economy, but...

ANDREW MARR

(over) But it's tapping on someone's door with a hot meal, isn't it?

DAVID CAMERON

Well, look at the choices we've made as a government. We actually said we would not only protect the basic state pension, but we would increase it by what we called the triple lock, so you're always protected, it either goes up by prices or by earnings or by two and a half per cent, whichever is the best outcome, and as a result Britain's pensioners today are 800 pounds a year better off on the basic state pension than they were back in 2010, by the end of next year it'll be 950 pounds...

ANDREW MARR

So meals on wheels could therefore just vanish and it wouldn't matter?

DAVID CAMERON

No, I think what you need is to make sure we fund councils properly so they're able to deliver the services that they need, and councils, like every other part of government, has had to make efficiencies, if I take my own council, they are combining the managing director, the

finance director, the management teams with four or five other councils in order to save back office costs and go on spending the money on the services that people need.

ANDREW MARR

A council leader in Tatton, Conservative council leader, saying things are going, have been cut to the bone, they cannot carry on given the pressures on old age services and so forth. And councils in Devon are saying much the same thing, again Conservatives, up and down the country council leaders who are Conservatives, loyal members of your party, are saying you have gone too far, we can't carry on like this.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I, I don't accept that, we have asked them to make efficiencies and they've done a brilliant job, councils up and down the country...

ANDREW MARR

(over) But they say they've gone as far as they can with efficiencies.

DAVID CAMERON

I don't accept that, because you've still got councils that aren't combining their back office costs, that aren't working out ways of being more efficient, if, if you're looking at a business, a business doesn't say, well we've made five or ten per cent efficiencies, let's stop there, let's just now start spending money again, a good business serving its customers looks for efficiencies every single year, and that is what government, central government and local government, has to do.

ANDREW MARR

Let's turn to another area of public spending, which is defence, because we've made big, big cuts in the, in the army and that's going on, and now generals are starting to complain a lot about possible further cuts. You said at the last NATO meeting that every member of NATO had to do 2 per cent of GDP on defence, and we are roughly at that, we're just below it at the moment in that...

DAVID CAMERON

(over) We're not, actually, we're above it.

ANDREW MARR

Well, the generals say 1.9 per cent.

DAVID CAMERON

(over) The figures, the figures speak....

ANDREW MARR

(over) The generals would, perhaps.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, the point I'd make, is again we made a choice, we had, we faced an impossibly difficult situation in 2010, we had a massive budget deficit, one of the biggest in the developed world, we had to get that down, but we said defence is important for our country so we froze the defence budget, in cash terms, 33 billion pounds, and as a result we still have the fifth largest defence budget for any country in the world...

ANDREW MARR

The Royal...

DAVID CAMERON

... and I think that's, important, now yes, the...

ANDREW MARR

The Royal United Services Institute says it would cost 25 billion pounds over the next Parliament to maintain that 2 per cent. That seems an impossible thing to happen.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, we are meeting the 2 per cent, we'll set out our, our plans at the election...

ANDREW MARR

But in five years' time you won't.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, let's, let's see how these things develop, that's going to depend on the decisions we make on what happens to our economy, but I would say with defence, I think a very good example of how this government has shown competence and delivery, we inherited a situation in defence where there was a 35 billion pound black hole, we've closed that black hole, we've made our defence forces more efficient, and if you look at what's coming out now in terms of new aeroplanes, new hunter-killer submarines, brand new aircraft carriers...

ANDREW MARR

Those two new aircraft carriers you mention, are designed to have about 80 to 90 aircraft on top of them, we have so far ordered four in total.

DAVID CAMERON

No, no, we're ordering many more than that, they'll both be fully functioning aircraft carriers and we've seen, for instance, not just in protecting and defending our security but also in delivering aid in the Philippines, how useful our, our Royal Navy can be. The point I'm making is we had to make choices, Andrew, and the choices that we made were one, protect the NHS, that is absolutely precious to Britain's families, precious to me, it gets protected. Second choice we made is we must get the deficit down, we've cut it by a half, third choice we made is let's make Britain the most attractive place to start a business, run a business, employ people, and Britain is now one of the fastest growing countries in the western world, we've created a thousand jobs a day...

ANDREW MARR

(over) You've mentioned the NHS several times...

DAVID CAMERON

... our economy is doing well, but all of this is at risk, as I see it, we have four months in this year to save Britain's economic recovery, it is all at risk from a group of politicians who've learnt nothing from the last five years and who will borrow, spend, and tax all over again, putting us right back to square one.

ANDREW MARR

Including apparently some of your Cabinet colleagues.

DAVID CAMERON

Er, my Cabinet colleagues are absolutely behind...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Nick Clegg, Vince Cable...

DAVID CAMERON

(over) Well yes, the... no, no.

ANDREW MARR

(over) Vince Cable suggests that you're going to reduce the army to a mere ceremonial...
Cabinet colleagues as well...

DAVID CAMERON

(over) Oh those Cabinet colleagues!

ANDREW MARR

(over) ..those Cabinet colleagues, yes.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, look, they have to find some way of becoming relevant and saying something interesting but look, the fact is, they have, up to now, backed a plan that has delivered record jobs, record growth, and a turnaround of the British economy, now we say we haven't finished the job, we're on the right track but now is absolutely the wrong moment to turn back, we should complete the job and completing the job should mean at the end of seven years of economic growth putting aside some money for a rainy day, that is the...

ANDREW MARR

(over) We're being watched...

DAVID CAMERON

... moderate, sensible, reasonable thing to do.

ANDREW MARR

We're being watched, Prime Minister, up and down the country, by service families, army families, who are very much aware that the army is now down to 80,000 servicemen, can you give them a pledge that after another five years of Conservative government you won't cut that to 70,000 or 60,000?

DAVID CAMERON

I don't want to see, I don't want to see our, our regular armed services reduced below the level that they are now, but I would make the point of course...

ANDREW MARR

Is that a promise?

DAVID CAMERON

Yeah, of course, it's a commitment I'm happy to make, I don't want to see that happen, but that won't, I would make the point that if you combine the regular forces with our reserve forces we'll actually see the overall number go up, and many countries...

ANDREW MARR

Except that we're not getting the recruits into the reserves.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, we are, now, we are now getting the recruits, and many countries, er, that we should model ourselves on in terms of modern armed forces do have that balance between regular and reservists, sometimes people look down on the reservists but they have been fighting and sometimes on occasions dying for us in Afghanistan. Our reservists are something which we should be incredibly proud of in our country, and our expansion of them is, is a really good thing for us to do.

ANDREW MARR

Let me return to the issue of cuts, because the big issue, the big question is this, you have promised as a government in the autumn statement very, very substantial, many billions of pounds' worth of cuts, if you are re-elected, but you won't really tell us exactly where they're going, you've talked about welfare....

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I think I've been more...

ANDREW MARR

(over)... but exactly where they're going to fall.

DAVID CAMERON

(over)... I've, Andrew, I've been more specific already on your programme than any other party leader, I've...

ANDREW MARR

(over) But not specific enough.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I'm, let me, let me be a bit more specific if you like. We've laid out the 30 billion, right, no other party have told you where that money is coming from we've said five from tax evasion and avoidance, 12 billion from welfare, of which three billion is found by freezing the working age benefits, the, the 13 billion in terms of the departmental reduction, some of that can be achieved by efficiencies in government, we've set out a ten billion pound plan...

ANDREW MARR

(over) But we've had five years of that.

DAVID CAMERON

We, we set out a ten billion plan, er, at the Autumn Statement, but the point I'd make to, to you and to viewers watching at home is, you know with my leadership, with the team that I have, that we are capable of making efficiencies, of living within our means, of getting the deficit down, while protecting the NHS, while protecting the poorest in our country, while making sure pensioners are protected...

ANDREW MARR

Well...

DAVID CAMERON

... we've done those things, people don't have to, er, you know, believe...

ANDREW MARR

Increase in child poverty, Prime Minister.

DAVID CAMERON

Well, as I said, under this government child poverty has gone down, that's a fact...

ANDREW MARR

(over) The first two years...

DAVID CAMERON

... inequality, no, well you keep making this point, look, I want to be judged, I'm very happy to be judged on the record that I have as Prime Minister over the last five years, and the fact is inequality in our country has gone down, child poverty has gone down, but I would say even more important than those statistical figures is the fact that there are 1.75 million of our fellow men and, countrymen and women who didn't have work who have work today because the government's long-term economic plan is working. That is the central question at this coming election is, do we stick to the plan, do we stick to the road we're on, do we complete the job, because that can deliver something better for all of Britain, look, I'm not interested in the way, in the statistics and the figures, what matters to me is can I find for our fellow countrymen and women the job that they want, that, allowing them to keep more of their own money to spend as they choose, a home that they can call their own, a good school place for their children, dignity and security in retirement, those are the things that I'm interested in delivering in the next five years as Prime Minister.

ANDREW MARR

And several, several times you've mentioned the National Health Service, a very interesting article in the Mail on Sunday today by Frank Field, Labour MP, who says this, and I'm not going to go into the statistics or percentages, by and large the NHS is unaffordable because of the fast-aging population, the huge cost of extra drugs, all the new treatments and so forth, it is a long-term irreversible crisis, in which the political parties are behaving as if it's a Punch and Judy show, they're attacking each other, you're being attacked by Labour, er, today, you will attack them and so forth, let's take the NHS out of politics, let's have an increased in

National Insurance benefits to pay for it, let's have a national agreement to protect the NHS for the future. Are you not at all attracted by that?

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I'm very attracted by taking the NHS out of politics, because it's such an extraordinarily important organisation for our country. I don't believe it is unaffordable, I think that actually if you look at the Simon Stevens plan he is the man who's been put in charge of running the NHS, he used to work for Tony Blair, he's a very effective administrator, he came forward with a plan and we have come forward with the money to fund that plan, and so I think all parties should accept the Simon Stevens plan, accept the funding that we've put forward, and then let's go ahead with trying to solve some of the problems in healthcare in our country, like what Nicci was talking about in terms of dementia, let's make ourselves more dementia-friendly...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Are you attracted by that idea, by the way, of letting families into hospitals to...

DAVID CAMERON

I think there's a lot of merit in it, I think all the things we can do to try and help those suffering with dementia to keep hold of memories, to try and keep hold of family, because we've doubled the money into dementia research but it's not just the money that counts, it's making ourselves a more dementia-friendly country. I did something which I don't think any Prime Minister has done before, we had the whole cabinet trained as dementia friends at a cabinet meeting just a few weeks ago because what we need is our whole society to be more friendly to people...

ANDREW MARR

So as I decline, Jeremy Hunt will be knocking on my door, it's a slightly scary thought, with respect to him, but nonetheless, get, may I move on now to Europe, the other huge issue confronting you. So from what I can tell, you are no longer committed to a major, major reorganization of our relations with Europe, there's not going to be a treaty change, the changes that you were talking about are changes in benefits and changes at the edges, not to do with changes in the overall number of people coming into this country, and therefore you have pulled back a bit from what you were saying a year ago.

DAVID CAMERON

No, I don't think that's right, I mean, the changes are that we need are changes that are good for Britain and good for Europe, they do involve treaty change, er, and proper, full-on treaty change for that matter, but it's not...

ANDREW MARR

(over) In what areas, may I ask?

DAVID CAMERON

(continues) ... well, as I've said we need to get out of ever-closer union, that it something that shouldn't apply to the United Kingdom, we need parliaments to be able to combine, to block regulations, I think that is very important, we need guarantees that as the single currency gets more countries in it, the single market, which Britain remains in, is properly protected, and crucially on the question of immigration, we need these very big changes that I'm putting forwards to the welfare system, some of which will require treaty change, and so I think everyone can understand these, under the proposals I have, if someone comes to Britain from Europe, looking for a job, they don't get unemployment benefit, if they don't have a job within six months they have to go home, they have to work for four years before they have paid in enough to the system in order to claim things like tax credits...

ANDREW MARR

(over) These seem relatively popular, but...

DAVID CAMERON

...and also crucially, you don't get child benefit in respect to children that you leave at home with your, your family in other countries, and those four changes are hugely important.

ANDREW MARR

Do you still want a cap or a stop on the free movement of people into Britain, yes or no?

DAVID CAMERON

Those things I believe would achieve a reduction in, in migration...

ANDREW MARR

So that's a no.

DAVID CAMERON

... into the, well, what matters is can you get control of the ...

ANDREW MARR

(over) You, you're not in effect going to have overall control of migration from the rest of the EU into Britain, yes or no?

DAVID CAMERON

I'm, I'm looking for a control of the figures and my changes will deliver that.

ANDREW MARR

But not a cap, not any kind of...

DAVID CAMERON

We'll have the cap for migration for economic purposes from outside the EU...

ANDREW MARR

(over) But not inside... that's clear.

DAVID CAMERON

(over)... which has been ... and functioning well.

ANDREW MARR

Now, it's been said by a lot of people that committed to a 2017 referendum, that's going to mean that if you are re-elected with a majority government, you are going to spend the first two years engaged in an intense internal and insupportable argument inside your party about nothing except Europe, are you still committed to 2017 as the referendum date or could you bring it nearer?

DAVID CAMERON

Absolutely, the referendum must take place before the end of 2017. I, if we could do that earlier I'd be delighted, the sooner I can deliver on this commitment of a renegotiation and a referendum, the sooner I can deliver on that the better, but Andrew, I wouldn't say...

ANDREW MARR

Would you...

DAVID CAMERON

... hang on, I think this is important, I wouldn't say that the renegotiation on Europe and the vital work of our long-term economic plan are different, they are part of the same argument, which is how do we make sure a strong and prosperous Britain can provide the security for our families and for our country in the years ahead? And if we've got a Europe that isn't growing, a European Union that isn't working, migration arrangements that don't work for countries like Britain, we've got a problem, and I believe in confronting and dealing with problems rather than just putting them off.

ANDREW MARR

(over) And you are prepared to go into a referendum, if you don't get what you want, you, you will never say these words, but are you prepared to campaign for us to leave the EU if you don't get what you want?

00:22:01

DAVID CAMERON

Well, what I've said is...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Yes or no, I'm sorry.

DAVID CAMERON

... if I don't get, no, no, if I don't get what I want I rule nothing out, and I, ruling nothing out means just that, you could...

ANDREW MARR

(over)... you can camp-, you can envisage campaigning...

DAVID CAMERON

... every ... it means ruling nothing out, but let's be clear, I'm always clear in politics, you should try and explain what it is you want to achieve, and what I want for Britain, what I want for my country, is to reform the European Union, to make it better for us, and then to recommend that we stay in the European Union because we need those trade links, we need those markets open, we want that influence in the world, that is good for Britain, and we can see, there are times...

ANDREW MARR

Would you give cabinet ministers and other Conservatives who want to campaign for an out, the freedom to do so in such a referendum?

00:22:39

DAVID CAMERON

Well, there are Conservative Members of Parliament who want to leave the European Union...

ANDREW MARR

Yes, there are.

DAVID CAMERON

... come what may, but if you're part of the government, then clearly you're part of the team that is aiming for the renegotiation...

ANDREW MARR

(over) So you're not going to do a free vote...

DAVID CAMERON

... referendum...

ANDREW MARR

(over)... as Labour did in, in the 70s.

DAVID CAMERON

No, I've set out that very clearly in the past.

ANDREW MARR

Right, moving on. Everyone, as we've been hearing in the paper review, thinks there's going to be a hung Parliament or that's quite likely, I know you don't want one, but if there is, are there any circumstances in which you would allow Nigel Farage or another member of UKIP a top seat at the Cabinet table or a job as a minister?

00:23:07

DAVID CAMERON

I hope you're going to forgive me, and other interviewers will forgive me, that between now and the election I'm going to fight as hard as I can for a Conservative overall majority because I think that's in the interests of our country...

ANDREW MARR

But you're not going to tell us what would happen if you don't get one?

00:23:19

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I don't, I think people can see in, with my record, the first Prime Minister in a hung Parliament who absolutely put the national interest ahead of any party interest, former, formed as it were a government...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Let me try it another way.

DAVID CAMERON

... for the whole country, so, look, I've, I've got a record, people can see my track record, but...

ANDREW MARR

(over) I'll try it another way.

00:23:34

DAVID CAMERON

Well you can try all you like but in the end, let, why don't we talk about...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Well, let me...

DAVID CAMERON

.. what you're plans are for the country rather than what might happen in this circumstance or that circumstance, I know we all love all this...

ANDREW MARR

It's going to be terribly important, I'm not clear, given the way you talk about UKIP, they're the people, a vote for UKIP would let Ed Miliband in, you say, what you don't say is that UKIP are bad people and we disagree with them fundamentally on the big questions and we're against them because we're against them because we're against them. Are you?

00:23:59

DAVID CAMERON

Well, they've clearly got some politicians in their party who have some extraordinary views, there's no doubt about it, we see day after day, week after week, them having to expel people, er, because they've said, you know, appalling things about, er, different sorts of people and people who choose different lifestyles, you've got people who think that, you know, gay marriage caused floods. I mean, you know, they've clearly got some issues, but that, look, what I choose to focus on is the positive vision I've got for the future of our country and the real choice, and the, the truth is this, that of course there are alternatives, people can vote in different ways, they can vote Green, they can vote Liberal, Labour, UKIP, SNP, but the fact, as I see it, is all those options give you uncertainty, instability, the potential of chaos if it leads to a Miliband-in-Downing-Street-Balls-in-the-Treasury debt-funded government, the

only alternative to that is the competence and delivery that you know you get with me as Prime Minister and with Conservatives in power.

ANDREW MARR

What are the percentage chances of you meeting your tens of thousands immigration promise by the time of this election in a few months' time?

00:25:00

DAVID CAMERON

Well, I've said it's the right, the figures will be whatever the figures are, and obviously it's very challenging at the moment with the British economy growing as fast as it is, and we've been, we've been, we've been providing...

ANDREW MARR

(over) Higher than zero and lower than two perhaps?

00:25:14

DAVID CAMERON

We've been, we've been providing employment for a lot of people around Europe, now I want to change that by making sure we not only have tough immigration control, but also we have welfare reform and education reform in our country so we prepare our own young people to do those jobs.

ANDREW MARR

Prime Minister, a challenging year ahead, thank you very much indeed for joining us this morning.

INTERVIEW ENDS

N.B: Editorial note -

Please note than just under half way through this transcript, Andrew Marr refers to leaders of Conservative councils who have been warning that the cut back in central government funding has obliged them to restrict the services they can provide to local residents. Andrew Marr said:-

“A council leader in Tatton, Conservative council leader, saying things are going, have been cut to the bone, they cannot carry on given the pressures on old age services and so forth. And councils in Devon are saying much the same thing, again Conservatives, up and down the country council leaders who are Conservatives, loyal members of your party, are saying you have gone too far, we can't carry on like this.”

Andrew Marr's research notes referred to the Tory leader of Trafford Council, Matt College, saying 'we are getting close to the bone' ... and John Hart, Tory leader of Devon Council, saying: 'We are going to slim down to such an extent, we will not be able to do anything but what is mandatory in the way of services to people'

Andrew Marr did not name any individual council leaders, but he said “Tatton” when he meant “Trafford”. There is no such local authority as Tatton. We apologise for this error and wish to make it clear that although the wider point stands that some council leaders are complaining about the squeeze that they are obliged to pass on, we were not referring to any council or any council leader within the parliamentary constituency of Tatton.