

OPINION



MARK FLETCHER

Bolsover MP

The key thing for us now is to maintain that 'can do' spirit

As I write this, we've passed the next step in the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown and the 'stay at home' instruction has been relaxed.

Friends and families can now meet outside (I'm hoping to see my dad and step mum next weekend for the first time in months for a dog walk) and play sports outdoors.

Undoubtedly the past year has been incredibly challenging for millions of Brits.

But with the milestone of 30 million people being vaccinated recently, and with the sun shining, you can



sense the optimism in the air.

I'll be celebrating the next stage of the roadmap by visiting Bolsover School. Getting our schools back open was such

an important step in the right direction, and once again our teachers and headteachers have worked incredibly hard to make it all go smoothly.

'Getting our schools back open was such an important step in the right direction, and once again our teachers and headteachers have worked incredibly hard to make it all go smoothly,' says Mark Fletcher.

I'm looking forward to seeing Mr Hall and his team in person. We've done plenty of virtual meetings over the past few months, but I don't think I'm alone in thinking they're a poor substitute for being in the same room.

I'm also meeting with the leader of Bolsover District Council (BDC) to discuss how we best reshape Bolsover's economy after the pandemic.

I think one of the biggest lessons we have learned from the pandemic is the importance of local government.

Whether it be Derbyshire County Council, North East

Derbyshire District Council or BDC, I've been so impressed with how quickly they've responded to various challenges. I may not agree with every decision they make, but I can't fault how they've stepped up to the challenge.

The key thing now is to maintain that 'can do' spirit, to work together on the next set of challenges, around building a more high-skilled and stable local economy in North Derbyshire.

As we saw in the Budget with the incredible success of the East Midlands Freeport bid, we can achieve great things for our region when we all work together.

We can combine new jobs, industries, and infrastructure with our ambitions to be net zero by 2050. But to do so requires the kind of dedication, ambition, and speediness that the pandemic demanded; we cannot now go back to business as usual.

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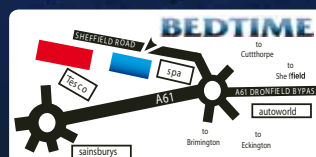
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