

Letter to The Financial Times: Pericles would balk at PM's reopening gamble

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Boris Johnson's latest decision to end almost all Covid-19 restrictions in England on July 19 is a gamble not least because he has directly asked the public to "take responsibility for tackling the virus" (Johnson brushes aside warnings over lifting of Covid restrictions", Report, July 6).

The decision would never have gained the approval of his hero, the ancient Greek statesman and general Pericles. Indeed, the historian Thucydides (History, 2.65) concluded that "thanks to his high standing, ability and celebrated honesty, Pericles could wield sovereign power over the people, and so lead them rather than be led by them".

By delegating full responsibility to the public, it is the prime minister who is asking the people to lead the country out of the pandemic.

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