

## These figures are reminder of chaos and negligence of Philip Hammond and Theresa May over these past seven years of Tory economic failure – John McDonnell

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, commenting on the latest Public Sector Finance figures published this morning by the ONS, which shows that £121.6 billion was added to the national debt since May 2016, said:

“These figures are a reminder of the chaos and negligence of both Philip Hammond and Theresa May over these past seven years of Tory economic failure; the deficit is still not been cleared as they promised it would be in 2015, and the national debt continues to rise.

“Regardless of their broken promises on the public finances they will continue to pursue a failed policy of austerity while handing out massive tax giveaways to big business and a wealthy few, yet enforcing spending cuts on our public services.

“However, there is no longer support in parliament for a continuation of their failed austerity policies, and if they cannot recognise this and change direction, then they should step aside and let Labour take charge.

“As only a Labour Government will set out a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to help build the high wage, high skill economy of the future for the many not the few.”

---

## Letting agents fees to be banned after pressure from Liberal Democrats

Letting agents fees look set to be banned in this year Queen's Speech following pressure from the Liberal Democrats.

The fees cost on average £223 per tenancy but under the new plans they will be banned and tenants will be given the opportunity to recover illegal fees imposed upon them.

Lib Dem peer Olly Greender, who has led a campaign against the fees, said: "I am absolutely delighted that the ban on letting fees set out in my Private Members' Bill is now being proposed as law.

"We know from the tragedy of Grenfell Tower that tenants' rights have been ignored for far too long.

"It's time we made them a much greater priority, including by introducing a public register of rogue landlords."

---

## [Press release: Showcasing our cool kit at London Rivers Week](#)

On Tuesday 27 June from 12pm to 3pm at Walthamstow Marshes, near Springfield Marina, the Environment Agency will be showcasing their cool kit and little critters as part of London Rivers Week.

London Rivers Week is running again this year with Catchment Partnerships and environmental organisations such as Thames21, ZSL, London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and the South East Rivers Trust, putting on public events, walks and talks at special river sites.

Amanda MacLean, Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency, said:

We are very excited to be showcasing our work at the London Rivers Week this year on the 27 June. Over the last 20 years the Environment Agency has made big steps to improve the quality of water in rivers. Please do come along to find out about the wide variety of ways in which we work to create a better place for people and the environment. We're bringing lots of our cool kit for you to see.

The Environment Agency will have demonstrations of flood risk management equipment, including their:

- weed cutting boat
- flood water pumps and aerators (in and by the river)
- incident response vehicle, and
- temporary flood barrier.

Members of the public can talk to staff and find out about the following

activities:

- monitoring the health of our rivers; trays of invertebrates will be on display
- invasive species
- pollution incidents
- flood risk management; including how we work with communities to reduce flood risk, and
- general information about our other activities and work with partners such as LVRPA (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority).

Other exciting events the Environment Agency is running during London Rivers Week include:

- 4pm to 6pm Monday 26 June at Watling Park, Burnt Oak, HA8 0RF at the northern entrance off Abbots Road.
- 12pm on Tuesday 27 June at the Strand on Kew Green.
- 11:30am on Wednesday 28 June at the River Wandle, Merton High Street, Colliers Wood.

More details and a full list of events can be found on the [official website](#).

---

## **[Press release: Wiltshire man handed suspended prison sentence for running illegal waste activity](#)**

Mr. Robert Cooper, 78, of Hicks Leaze Farm, Chelworth appeared at Swindon Magistrates Court on Monday 5 June 2017 for operating a regulated waste facility without the necessary environmental permit (contrary to regulations 12 (1)(a) and 38 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010) at the Farm between 9 April 2014 and 10 July 2014.

The defendant had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing on 15 May but the case was adjourned for a pre-sentence report due to the facts of the case and his previous waste offences.

Mr Cooper was given a 12 week prison sentence, suspended for 2 years and ordered to perform 200 hours of unpaid work. The court also ordered Mr Cooper to pay the Environment Agency's full costs of £13,027.35

Mr Howard McCann prosecuting, told the court how the Environment Agency started investigations following complaints from members of the public about the burning of material in December 2013, and the sheer number of lorries dumping waste on site from April 2014 onwards.

Environment Agency officers visited the site and witnessed large quantities of waste including 4 large mounds of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, the largest of which was measured at approximately 65 metres long, 7 metres high in places and between 5 to 7 metres wide. Officers estimate a total of about 8,285 cubic metres of waste on site. The farm is about the size of 9 football pitches. Mr Cooper allowed people to tip their mixed waste for up to £40 per load, treated it by sorting the materials and then burning some of it.

Mr Cooper charged people between £10 (green waste) and £40 per 20-tonne load (C&D waste). Given the main waste mounds discovered by officers, they calculated that Mr Cooper could have made more than £23,000 from his illegal activities. The court found that Mr Cooper's actions were deliberate and that the environmental harm was localised due to the presence of plasterboard, chemical drums and leachate seen on site. The justices also found that the offending was repeated and for financial gain. The court gave Mr Cooper credit for his early guilty plea and co-operation with the Environment Agency throughout its investigation.

Checks with the Environment Agency's public register confirmed that he did not have a permit for the site, and although he did have 6 waste exemptions, none of these would have allowed him to carry out the types of activities seen by officers.

All waste activities are regulated by the Environment Agency. Whenever waste is stored or treated, the operator is required to hold an environmental permit or register for an exemption, which is reserved for low-risk waste activities only.

During site visits, Environment Agency officers observed the burning of waste with discarded empty containers labelled as "dangerous to the environment". One officer experienced a strong acrid smell which made him feel so unwell that he had to use a protective dust mask. The officers saw what appeared to be leachate puddles in and around the burning waste and plasterboard, which cannot be disposed of to landfill with other biodegradable waste as it can produce toxic hydrogen sulphide gas.

Steve Clare of the Environment Agency said:

It is very disappointing that Mr Cooper continued to allow the operation of an illegal site despite his previous convictions.

The net is closing in on people who think they can make easy money undercutting legitimate waste businesses by putting the local environment at risk. We are constantly gathering information on illegal waste sites, criminal activities and environmental crime in Wiltshire and across the south east.

We are taking a zero tolerance approach against offenders. In cases like this where individuals consistently operate illegally, we have absolutely no hesitation in prosecuting them, as we want to make

sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

This extends to landowners, and their agents, who fail to take steps to prevent such offences once they are made aware of them.

For all media enquiries, please call 0800 141 2743.

---

## [EU-Republic of Moldova Human Rights Dialogue](#)

Chisinau, 20 June 2017

On 20 June 2017, the European Union and the Republic of Moldova held the eighth round of their Human Rights Dialogue in Chisinau.

In line with its policy of consulting civil society ahead of meetings on human rights, the European Union met representatives of Moldovan and international Civil Society Organisations prior to the Dialogue. Civil Society representatives were also invited to the Dialogue and attended as observers.

The Dialogue was held in an open and constructive atmosphere. The Moldovan Government has an ongoing commitment to improving the human rights situation in the country and achieving sustainable progress in this area. Following up on developments since the last Dialogue in June 2016, discussions covered a wide range of issues: freedom of expression, pluralism of the media and reforms in the audio-visual domain; the electoral legislation; the protection of vulnerable groups, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; the rights of the child; and the fight against impunity, ill-treatment and human rights protection in the justice system.

The creation of a National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and Moldova's signature of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence were appreciated by the European Union. A Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan, taking into account the recommendations of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review in this process, should now be adopted. The European Union recalled the importance of providing the necessary resources to the Office of the Ombudsman on Human Rights (Advocate of the People) and the Equality Council (the national anti-discrimination institution) for them to be able to fulfill their mission. The EU also underlined the need to align Moldova's legislation on freedom of the media with European standards, to finalise the work on the new Audiovisual Code and to continue combating all forms of discrimination on any ground.

The Dialogue also offered the opportunity to touch upon a key topic in the

current EU-Moldova political dialogue: the proposed reform of the electoral system. In this respect, the European Union reiterated its expectation that the authorities of the Republic of Moldova would study the Opinion issued by the Venice Commission and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on a draft revision of the electoral legislation of the Republic of Moldova, and follow its recommendations.

The Moldovan delegation was led by Mr Vladimir Cebotari, Minister of Justice and by Mr Nicolae Eșanu, Deputy Minister of Justice. The EU delegation was led by Mr Adriano Martins, Deputy Head of Division for bilateral relations with the Eastern Partnership countries in the European External Action Service.

The next Human Rights Dialogue between the European Union and Moldova is scheduled to take place in Brussels in 2018.