

Government to set out way forward on the Northern Ireland Protocol to Parliament

Press release

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Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost, and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SoSNI), Brandon Lewis, have today spoken at the Policy Exchange think tank about the way forward on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Both Lord Frost and SoSNI reaffirmed the Government's commitment to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions. They said that the Protocol was failing in its objectives to minimise impact on everyday lives in Northern Ireland and facilitate trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Lord Frost announced that the Government is considering its next steps and will set out its approach on the Protocol to Parliament before summer recess.

Lord Frost said:

The current situation is not consistent with the careful balance in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and is not how the Protocol should be working. That political reality must be acknowledged and dealt with. This Government cannot simply ignore that reality and stand by as things become more tense and more difficult.

We will always prefer a consensual approach to resolving this situation. We are confident, given everything we have been through in the last few years, that there are ways of finding the balance and finding the necessary adjustments. Working in this way is the responsible thing to do and it's the best way to meet the

Government's obligations to everyone in Northern Ireland. But obviously all options remain on the table.

So we are considering our next steps, we are discussing with all those with an interest, and I can say today that we will set out our approach to Parliament in a considered way before the summer recess.

The prize on offer for us all, if we can re-establish a new balance in a way that works for us all, is that we can set relations between the UK and the EU onto a new trajectory, one that moves beyond the current tensions, one that moves beyond the challenges of the last few years, and realises the real, genuine potential for friendly cooperation.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

The impact of how the Protocol is being operated is being felt across communities going about their daily lives. This is distracting from the important task of realising Northern Ireland's huge economic potential.

Northern Ireland has real economic strengths and we should be focusing on how we can drive up innovation, close the skills gap, increase exports and seize the opportunities of the green industrial revolution.

My vision for Northern Ireland is about building a shared and stable future for all people in Northern Ireland, harnessing the positive links between peace, security and prosperity.

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