

Jeremy Corbyn speech on Brexit

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at an event in Basildon on Labour's plans for a jobs-first Brexit, said:

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

It seems like a long time ago now, but this election was called by the Prime Minister three years early, supposedly in order to make Britain's exit from the European Union easier for her to manage.

A lot has happened since then. The terrible atrocity in Manchester above all, which has driven home the need to be more effective in the action we take to protect our people, both at home and abroad.

And then we have the extraordinary meltdown of the Conservative Party's own manifesto within days of it being launched.

Having declared war on Britain's pensioners, it is now all but impossible to find anyone who can tell you what the Conservative policy actually is on the critical issue of social care, or how many million people stand to lose their winter fuel payments.

The older generation is being reminded of a central truth in British politics: You can't trust the Tories. You can't trust the Tories with your pension; with your tax credits; with your personal independence payments; with your national insurance contributions; one U-turn and broken promise after another by this Conservative leadership has made that absolutely clear.

At the same time, we have launched Labour's own manifesto, setting out positive and fully-costed policies on funding the NHS; scrapping tuition fees; recruiting 10,000 more police officers; raising the living wage to £10; protecting pensioners' incomes; building more than a million new homes and much more.

We are asking the British people for their support, above all on the basis of that programme of social justice.

But it is also right that we return to the issue of Brexit.

Negotiations with the EU leaders will start in just 18 days.

And the British people have a choice over what priorities, what principles, the British Government will take into those talks.

And which team they trust to lead the difficult negotiations

ahead.

I am proud to be joined here today by Labour's team of Brexit negotiators: Keir Starmer; Emily Thornberry; and Barry Gardiner

A team with the skills and experience to get the best for Britain as we move towards leaving the European Union.

We know the three Tories in whose hands Theresa May has placed our national future: David Davis; Boris Johnson; and Liam Fox.

Now you know I don't do personal attacks, so let me just say that in Labour's Brexit team, there is no one who has fibbed to the British people about spending an extra £350 million a week on the NHS because of Brexit; and nobody who has promised to use Brexit to slash workers' rights; or slash tax for big corporations in a continental race to the bottom; or peddled illusions about the difficulties ahead.

We in Labour understand that getting the right deal, one that secures our country's interests for the long-term, will be challenging. A matter for serious planning and negotiation, not hectoring and threats.

But Labour is ready.

Ready to deliver a deal that gives British businesses and British society the chance to thrive in a post-Brexit world.

A deal that will allow us to upgrade our economy through public investment in infrastructure and high skilled jobs

A deal that will make Britain a centre for science, technology and research, attracting the brightest and best from around the country and the world, through strategic investment.

A deal that allows us to transform Britain into a country with the strongest rights and protections, and ends exploitation and undercutting in the labour market.

A deal that allows us to become a country that values and protects its public services and invests in its communities.

And a deal that will allow Britain to be a safe and outward looking country, strengthening friendships and working with allies to create a better future for our country, continent and our planet.

The Conservatives want a mandate for their Brexit plan – a plan that puts jobs and living standards at risk and threatens to turn our country into a low-wage offshore tax haven. "Changing our economic model", as Theresa May put it so delicately, leading a race to the bottom in public services and working conditions.

The party that closed down huge chunks of British industry under Margaret Thatcher, and now pays for tax handouts for the richest with cuts to vital public services, hasn't changed its spots.

So far, the rhetoric and threats from the Tory government has fostered a toxic climate.

Labour will start negotiations by setting a new tone.

We will confirm to the other member states that Britain is leaving the European Union. That issue is not in doubt.

But, instead of posturing threats and pumped up animosity, a Labour Government under my leadership, will set out a plan for Brexit based on the mutual interests of both Britain and the EU.

Labour will start by giving a clear commitment to the EU nationals who live, work and contribute a huge amount to British society, that they will be guaranteed their existing rights.

It is clear, through my own discussions with European leaders, that it would be the best way to secure reciprocal rights for British nationals living in other parts of the EU.

It is shameful that the Conservatives haven't acted on this already. That three million members of our communities have been left in limbo.

The Conservatives' refusal to make the simple commitment that decency demands is a stain on this government's reputation.

And Labour will be clear from the start: Britain's economy, business and workforce need tariff-free access to European markets to protect jobs and living standards, and securing that access will be our priority.

Britain certainly can thrive and prosper outside the EU. Our businesses are creative, industrious and inventive.

But they need access to European markets. They need to be part of unimpeded supply chains and they need the chance to grow beyond our borders in order to protect and create jobs, wealth and opportunity.

And the EU's member states have a mutual interest in maintaining and developing that trade with Britain.

So Britain needs a Labour Government. Instead of putting our economy first, the Conservatives' reckless approach has left us isolated and marginalised.

Increasing the chances of Britain crashing out of the EU without a deal, which would be the worst outcome for Britain.

Britain is leaving the EU. But let's be clear, there is no such thing as 'no deal'.

If we leave without a positive agreement because we have needlessly alienated everyone, we still have to trade with the EU, we still have terms for that trade and very bad ones at that.

Theresa May says no deal is better than a bad deal. Let's be clear: 'No deal' is in fact a bad deal. It is the worst of all deals, because it would leave us with World Trade Organisation tariffs and restrictions instead of the access to European markets we need.

That would mean slapping tariffs on the goods we export: an extra 10 per cent on cars, with the risk that key manufacturers would leave for the European mainland; taking skilled jobs with them.

In sector after sector, 'no deal' could prove to be an economic disaster. Theresa May's approach risks a jobs meltdown across Britain.

Instead, Labour will negotiate a tariff-free deal with the EU, which will benefit both sides, and we will transform our economy for a post-Brexit Britain through a new industrial strategy, that will use powers returned from Brussels, and will rewrite the rules of our economy, so that it serves the interests of the many rather than the few.

Our economy has become dangerously unbalanced; skewed towards London and the financial sector, while our once proud industrial communities have had to live through decades of managed decline.

Productivity and investment lag well behind our nearest competitors; our balance of payments is in deficit and insecure; low paid work is spreading. Leaving the EU will make addressing these weaknesses even more urgent.

That's why a Labour Government is vital to take a more active role in our economy, working with employers and trade unions to fuel growth and deliver prosperity to every corner of the country.

Powered by our National Investment Bank and National Transformation Fund, Labour's industrial strategy will deliver the investment our economy so desperately needs.

And our Shadow Business Secretary, Rebecca Long-Bailey, will be setting out more details of our investment and transformation plan for Britain tomorrow.

Soon, we will no longer be members of the European Union, but agreeing a deal that delivers the benefits of the European single market and

the customs union will be the priority for a Labour government.

Leaving the EU will mean the end of free movement of workers between Europe and Britain.

So Labour's new rules for managing immigration from Europe will be fair and based on what's best for the economy and our communities.

We will start with a package of strong labour market regulation measures, which will stop the endless undercutting of terms and conditions by unscrupulous employers, often through agency recruitment and which has fuelled much recent migration.

We will crack down on unscrupulous employers;

stop overseas-only recruitment of workers;

strengthen safety and protections at work;

give all workers equal rights from day one in a job;

and increase prosecutions of employers evading the minimum wage.

And, for areas where immigration has placed a strain on public services, Labour will reinstate the migrant impact fund scrapped by the Conservatives.

Labour's team will also guarantee and expand the rights and protections that British workers have secured through EU legislation.

We will bring forward a specific rights and protections Bill that will lock those protections into British law

The Conservatives simply cannot be trusted on rights at work.

They have led an all-out assault on workers' rights through their Trade Union Act.

Boris Johnson has demanded that the Government should scrap the EU social chapter.

And the Conservatives also failed to back Labour's efforts in parliament to protect workers' rights, which are derived from the European Union.

Labour will not only protect our existing rights, we will extend them.

And Labour's Brexit strategy will also keep Britain safe.

Unlike the Tories, we will not threaten to withdraw security co-operation from our European allies to get our way. We share similar values,

and the solidarity shown by people across Europe after the recent horrific attacks in Manchester; only underlines the point.

We need to work together to make Britain safer and Europe safer.

So Labour will use Brexit negotiations to confirm our commitment to cross border agencies, such as Europol and Eurojust, and we will seek to continue to use the European arrest warrant.

We will also hire 10,000 more police officers to make our communities safer, and an additional 1,000 people to help our security services deal with the threat of terrorism.

Labour is clear that the safety of our citizens should never be used as a bargaining chip.

The choice in this election is not Brexit or no Brexit.

That issue has been settled.

The choice is between a jobs-first Labour Brexit and a reckless Tory Brexit, based on a race to the bottom in working conditions and corporate taxes.

The choice is who you trust to fight for your future? A weak and wobbly Tory Party, which can't stick with its own key manifesto commitments for a week, which always puts the interests of the wealthy and big business first?

Or a Labour team with clear principles and proven competence, which will put jobs, living standards and the national interest first?

Labour has a plan to transform Britain into a high skill, high wage economy.

And build new trading relationships across the world.

Labour will build a fairer Britain that the millions who voted both "remain" and "leave" last year want to see.

By standing for the many not the few, Labour is the only party which can overcome the divisions of last year's referendum and deliver a Brexit that brings our country together.

On 19 June, Labour will be ready. Ready to negotiate a Brexit for the many not the few.

That is my promise to our country today.