

Chancellor Statement – 17 October

Mr Speaker,

The central responsibility of any government is to do what is necessary for economic stability.

Behind the decisions we take and the issues on which we vote are jobs families depend on, mortgages that have to be paid, savings for pensioners, and businesses investing for the future.

We are a country that funds our promises and pays our debts.

And when that is questioned, as it has been, this government will take the difficult decisions necessary to ensure there is trust and confidence in our national finances.

That means decisions of eye-watering difficulty.

But I give the House and the public this assurance: every single one of those decisions...

...whether reductions in spending or increases in tax, will prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable.

That is why I pay tribute to my predecessors for the Energy Price Guarantee, for the furlough scheme...

...and indeed for even earlier decisions to protect the NHS budget in a period when other budgets were being cut.

Mr Speaker, I want to be completely frank about the scale of the economic challenges we face.

We have had short term difficulties caused by the lack of an OBR forecast alongside the mini-budget...

...but there are also inflationary and interest pressures around the world.

Russia's unforgivable invasion of Ukraine has caused energy and food prices to spike.

We cannot control what is happening in the rest of the world, but when the interests of economic stability mean the government needs to change course, we will do so – and that is what I have come to the House to announce today.

In my first few days in this job, I've held extensive discussions with the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues, the Governor of the Bank of England, the OBR, the head of the Debt Management Office, Treasury officials, and many others.

The conclusion I have drawn from those conversations is that we need to do

more, more quickly, to give certainty to the markets about our fiscal plans.

And show through action, not just words, that the United Kingdom can and always will pay our way in the world.

We have therefore decided to make further changes to the mini budget immediately, rather than waiting until the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan in two weeks' time, in order to reduce unhelpful speculation about those plans.

Mr Speaker I am very grateful for your agreement on the need to give the markets an early, brief summary this morning, but I welcome the opportunity to give the House details of the decisions now.

We have decided on the following changes to support confidence and stability.

Firstly, the Prime Minister and I agreed yesterday to reverse almost all the tax measures announced in the Growth Plan three weeks ago that have not been legislated for in Parliament.

So we will continue with the abolition of the Health and Social Care Levy, changes to Stamp Duty, the increase in the Annual Investment Allowance to £1 million, and the wider reforms to investment taxes.

But we will no longer be proceeding with:

The cut to dividend tax rates, saving around £1 billion a year.

The reversal of the off-payroll working reforms introduced in 2017 and 2021, saving around £2 billion a year.

The new VAT-free shopping scheme for non-UK visitors, saving a further £2 billion a year.

Or the freeze to alcohol duty rates, saving around £600 million a year.

I will provide further details on how those rates will be updated, shortly.

Second, the Government is currently committed to cutting the basic rate of income tax to 19% in April of 2023.

This government believes that people should keep more of the money they earn, which is why we have continued with the abolition of the Health and Social Care Levy.

But at a time when markets are asking serious questions about our commitment to sound public finances, we cannot afford a permanent, discretionary increase in borrowing worth £6 billion a year.

So I have decided that the basic rate of income tax will remain at 20% – and it will do so indefinitely, until economic circumstances allow for it to be cut.

Taken together with the decision not to cut Corporation Tax, and restoring the top rate of income tax, the measures I've announced today will raise

around £32 billion every year.

The third step I'm taking today, Mr Speaker, is to review the Energy Price Guarantee.

This was the biggest single expense in the Growth Plan and one of the most generous schemes in the world.

It is a landmark policy for which I pay tribute to my predecessor.

It will support millions of people through a difficult winter and will reduce inflation by up to 5%.

So I confirm today that the support we are providing between now and April next year will not change.

But beyond next April, the Prime Minister and I have agreed it would not be responsible to continue exposing the public finances to unlimited volatility in international gas prices.

So I am announcing today a Treasury-led review into how we support energy bills beyond April next year.

The review's objective is to design a new approach that will cost the taxpayer significantly less than planned whilst ensuring enough support for those in need.

Any support for businesses will be targeted to those most affected. And the new approach will better incentivise energy efficiency.

There remain many difficult decisions to be announced in the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan on October 31st...

...when I confirm that we will publish a credible, transparent, fully costed plan to get debt falling as a share of the economy over the medium term...

...based on the judgement and economic forecasts of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

I would like to thank the OBR, whose director Richard Hughes I met this morning, and the Bank of England whose Governor Andrew Bailey I have now met twice.

I fully support the vital, independent roles both institutions play, which give markets, the public, and the world confidence that our economic plans are credible, and rightly hold us to account for delivering them.

But I want some more independent, expert advice as I start my journey as Chancellor.

So I am announcing today the formation of a new Economic Advisory Council to do just that.

The Council will advise the government on economic policy with the first four

names announced today:

- Rupert Harrison, former Chief of Staff to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,
- Gertjan Vlieghe, Element Capital
- Sushil Wadhvani, Wadhvani Asset Management
- Karen Ward, J. P. Morgan

Mr Speaker,

We remain completely committed to our mission to go for growth, but growth requires confidence and stability – which is why we are taking many difficult decisions, starting today.

But while we do need realism about the challenges ahead, we must never fall into the trap of pessimism.

Despite all the adversity and challenge we face, there is enormous potential in this country.

We have some of the most talented people in the world.

Three of the world's top ten best universities.

The most tech unicorns in Europe.

One of the world's great financial centres.

Incredible strengths in the creative industries...

...in science, research, engineering, manufacturing, and innovation.

All that gives me genuine optimism about our long-term prospects for growth.

But to achieve that, it's vital that we act now to create the stability on which future generations can build.

The reason the United Kingdom has always succeeded is because at big and difficult moments we have taken tough and difficult decisions in the long-term interests of the country. That is what will we now do.

And I commend this statement to the House.

Home Office launches Independent Examiner of Complaints Service

News story

The Home Office has launched a new Independent Examiner of Complaints (IEC) service for customers of the Department's immigration services.



In doing so, the Home Office has fulfilled another of the recommendations in Wendy Williams' Windrush Lessons Learned Review, published in March 2020.

Introducing an IEC service brings the Department in line with several other public service delivery departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

If customers are not satisfied with the final response to their complaints, they will have an opportunity to have their case reviewed independently by the IEC.

Although the IEC will not have any remit over immigration decisions, which remain subject to existing appeal processes, they will apply greater scrutiny and ultimately increase public confidence in the customer services delivered by the Home Office, as well as helping to manage reputational risk.

In making her original recommendation, Wendy Williams proposed that the new service should have the ability to identify systemic issues within the immigration system. The IEC will achieve that by using the data and insight from complaints to consider why particular issues might be arising and feed them back into the department to support the continuous improvement of services.

The Home Office is pleased to announce that, following a fair and open recruitment process, Moi Ali has been appointed as the new Independent Examiner of Complaints. She will be supported by an Office for the IEC, based in Stoke-on-Trent.

Ms Ali has a background in independent complaints review. For the last 4 years she has been the Independent Assessor of Complaints for the Crown

Prosecution Service and she will continue in that role on a part-time basis. She is passionate about providing a genuinely independent service, and about helping organisations to identify learning and wider lessons from complaints in order to improve their service.

Her approach is to understand the complainant journey and perspective, and to support staff to provide a complainant-centric service.

[Further information on the Independent Examiner of Complaints.](#)

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[TRA opens exemption review of UK bike importer](#)

News story

The TRA has begun reviewing an application from The Martlet Group to be exempted from an anti-dumping duty on certain bicycle parts from China.



The Trade Remedies Authority has today (17 October 2022) begun reviewing an application from a UK importer, The Martlet Group, to be exempted from an anti-dumping duty on certain bicycle parts from China.

The Martlet Group, which sells bikes in the UK under the Orro brand, submitted the application for exemption on the basis that it has not circumvented the UK trade remedies measure.

As the TRA has accepted the application for review, it will recommend that the Secretary of State for International Trade implements a temporary suspension of the duty for The Martlet Group's goods until the review is complete. Once the TRA has completed its review it will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State either to exempt the goods from the duty or for the duty to be applied for the length of the measure.

The anti-dumping measure on certain bicycle parts from China was transitioned when the UK left the EU. The TRA is required to initiate a Transition Review on this anti-dumping measure before 30 August 2024.

Notes to editors:

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether new trade remedy measures are needed to counter unfair import practices and unforeseen surges of imports.
- The current UK trade remedies measure covers two categories of goods. Category 1 (bicycles) which The Martlet Group pays 48.5% on imports from China and 7 other countries. Category 2 (certain bicycle parts) which Martlet pays 48.5% on imports from China only, when importing parts in quantities of 300 or more per month (per unit). It is the Category 2 goods Martlet are applying to be exempt from.
- [View the full notice of initiation.](#)
- Dumping occurs when goods are imported into a country and sold at a price that is below their normal value in their country of export.

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[Economic prosperity: is it actually in our Nature?](#)

It is sometimes said that the answer to any question in a headline is generally “no”. But with the question that we pose today – “Economic prosperity: is it actually in our Nature?” – the response from me is a resounding “yes”! As we’ll see, though, that isn’t just the view of the Chair of Natural England: it’s the verdict of a growing body of evidence from across the spectrum of science, business and government, and going back now for some years.

The question of whether we must sacrifice Nature for economic growth is not a new one, but the stakes have never been higher. Today we face not only into economic crisis, but also climate change and Nature emergencies, which means that if we take the wrong approaches, trading growth against environment, we risk plunging our country into a vicious spiral of decline, that is both ecological and economic.

The peril is already clear, with each week bringing yet more stark evidence of the climate and Nature emergency enveloping our planet: catastrophic flooding in Pakistan, wildfires across southern Europe and the demise of such rare and wonderful creatures such as the dugong.

In Britain this summer temperatures have comfortably broken the 40 C barrier for the first time, exacerbating a choking drought. Our web of life is unravelling with many once common wildlife, from hedgehogs to turtle doves, suffering decades of decline.

Too many people seem blind to the fact that our economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nature, with our entire way of life sustained by ecosystems as diverse as soils and the sea. Nature is the basis of our food supply, clean water, air and vital for human health and wellbeing. Degrading those key services means money has to be spent dealing with the fall-out, money that could be better spent elsewhere.

When it comes to food security, it's estimated that the pollination carried out by bees and other insects is worth nearly £700m to the UK economy, helping secure a farming industry worth over £120bn. Take that service away and we would have to spend an estimated £1.8bn a year hand-pollinating our crops, in the way they do in parts of southwestern China, where fruit farmers climb into the trees in the Spring to use feather dusters on sticks to move the pollen between blossoms by hand. 20 farmers are needed to replace the work of one bumblebee nest in those landscapes.

Peatlands are one of the best examples we have of the multiple benefits that Nature brings to society. Waterlogged blankets of dead plant matter cover a tenth of England and the high-quality water they filter into British rivers is valued at up to £888m per year. These wonderful wet places also make a huge contribution to conserving the native wildlife of our islands, hosting some of our rarest species, bittern, swallowtail butterfly and plants such as carnivorous sundews. Such is their outstanding importance that nearly a third of our areas of deep peat is notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Considering the urgency of the climate change emergency, it is perhaps not surprising that most prominent in the benefits peatlands provide is the fact of them being England's biggest natural carbon store, locking away 580m tonnes of carbon in the ground, and in the process keeping it out of the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, and just as in the case of many tropical rainforests, their degradation is now such that they are currently net emitters of carbon, rather than the net sinks that they once were. We rightly express our horror at the destruction of the Amazon but need to recognise that we have important recovery work to do right here in our own doorstep.

Just 13% of peat is in a natural state and this means the rest of it – drying out and degrading – works against us, releasing 10m tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere each year and sending discoloured water cascading from hillsides to expensive treatment works. And the water our broken peatlands can no

longer store instead rushes downstream and has been associated with various flooding incidents, in Yorkshire.

The Office for National Statistics has said that restoring all UK peatlands would cost £8bn-£21bn – but the carbon benefits alone would be around £109bn, giving a cost/benefit ratio of at least 5:1 and possibly 10:1. Got to be a good rate of return by anyone's estimation

This is before the millions of pounds of savings from water treatment and flood damage is factored in, never mind the wildlife benefits or the great potential for increased eco tourism.

Turning to the health benefits that arise from access to wonderful wildlife-rich landscapes, the strength of the connection between these has been underlined by a host of studies. One found that outdoor recreation provided health benefits worth more than £6bn a year, while another estimated that visits to woodlands saved £141m in reduced mental health treatment.

An often-overlooked aspect of the economy versus environment debate is how breathing life back into Nature results in life being breathed back into business too. In the United States there is evidence suggesting that for every \$1 million invested in Nature-based solutions, close to 40 jobs are created, about ten times more than would be secured via investments in fossil fuels.

The Dearne Valley in South Yorkshire, a former industrial wasteland has been transformed now the green lungs of communities across the North of England not only providing a wonderful place for people but the home of the increasingly scarce Willow Tit, it has led to a large number of new business enterprises springing up. This demonstrates how high-quality Nature is the precursor to high-quality investment and jobs.

Businesses understand this and are seeking opportunities to support Nature recovery with their own and investors' money. More than 160 companies have already joined forces with Natural England to help deliver the Government's promise to create a Nature Recovery Network across the country, which will be just as good for businesses as it will be for wildlife and people, because employees like to live in attractive Nature-filled places. On top of that are a range of other benefits that help companies to manage risk and realise opportunities. It's a case of both and rather than either or, business and nature.

The picture coming into sharp focus reveals how investing in Nature is not a drag on public finances, it actually saves the country money and creates the conditions necessary for economic prosperity. Far from being a block to economic development, it is increasingly clear that functioning natural systems are a vital prerequisite for it. The simple fact is that Nature is vital for our health, wealth and security. We can't do without it.

And of course on top of the financial and economic case is a moral and ethical one. It is recognised in the Government's ambitious 25 Year Environment Plan, which commits us to being the first generation that will

leave the environment in a better state for the next generation. This is a pioneering idea and one that we must honour to hand to not leave future generations with ecological and financial debt, but instead to invest in nature recovery in a way that makes sense for the future as well as today.

Economic development will be even harder to achieve as the riches of Nature become even more depleted than now, unless we take immediate, coordinated action.

The broad goal to improve the state of the natural environment is backed by targets enshrined in the Environment Act 2021 – including that to halt the catastrophic decline of species by 2030. The UK has also adopted the goal of protecting 30 per cent of our land for Nature by 2030. That act of Parliament also brought forward some of the key tools to advance both these ambitions including Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Conservation Covenants.

If we are to meet those targets – and we must – then, in the words of the Environment Secretary, we need to ensure that Nature and the economy are partners rather than seen as choices. That means weaving Nature recovery into the growth planning up front – the cheapest point at which to invest in Nature, and the one that also yields the biggest returns. That sort of logic appeals to all investors, whether their favourite colour is the green of Nature or the black of profit.

Nature recovery must be based on taking a more strategic approach to land use at the start of development planning, incorporating Nature recovery into the same process as planning for housing, infrastructure and industry. This would allow the identification of the most important places for Nature and the services society needs from Nature recovery. The resulting plans would deliver the beautiful places that would attract investment and enable people to enjoy healthy lives, as well as contributing to those 2030 targets.

Natural England, as the Government's statutory adviser on the environment, will continue to provide evidence-based advice to government on how it can progress its economic plans while establishing a better, more tailored British regime for Nature protection and recovery than the one implemented during the EU years. We do believe it is possible to do better, but only if Nature is taken to front and centre and if new regimes do not diminish existing protections, and indeed where possible seek to enhance them. At Natural England we have experience on how to do this, including from work on District Level Licensing for Great-crested Newts, and can see scope to expand that approach in proposed reforms.

Despite the opportunities to do better, some people are nonetheless understandably nervous about what a sharper focus on economic growth might mean for Nature. This is where an expression of more joined up thinking could help reveal the potential to secure bigger and quicker gains for Nature, including in Investment Zones which, if set up in an intelligent and integrated way, could allow Nature recovery to be planned into development at an early stage.

This in turn will give businesses the certainty needed to commit to Nature recovery in their planning, knowing that this will diminish risk, reduce costs, contribute to the more attractive places that will drive additional investment whilst fostering good relations with stakeholders. And if we can conceive processes that have the ecologists and planners sitting down together from the start, then the whole thing can go more quickly.

One important thing to bear in mind about Nature and economic development is that we already have the evidence that they can flourish together. A particularly strong case is the Thames Basin Heaths, which was declared a Special Protection Area for ground-nesting birds, stalling plans to build more than 50,000 homes. NE worked with the 11 local authorities involved and the developers on providing alternative greenspace for residents to use, resulting in the homes being built ahead of schedule and the populations of Dartford warbler, woodlark and nightjar actually increasing.

It's easy to look at this example and see how things might have gone very differently for the environment, without the intelligence and integration shown by all sides. This is the key to our debate. Short term economic growth achieved by trampling over Nature and its protections will not result in a healthy or sustainable economy. On the contrary, centuries of that kind of activity, whereby Nature has been liquidated for growth, has brought us to the doorstep of disaster, in the form of potentially catastrophic climate change and a mass extinction of animals and plants.

We cannot afford to carry on like that. Now is the time to take an integrated approach, whereby Nature recovery migrates to the centre of economic policy, and is no longer seen as an inevitable casualty of it.

[British Embassy donates PPE to Honduras](#)

World news story

The British Government donated PPE to Honduras to support Covid-19 pandemic response.



The UK government has donated personal protective equipment (PPE) to Honduras to support frontline staff and ensure they have the protection they need to do their vital work. The 123,000 PPE items will help thousands of frontline workers by supporting infection prevention control measures to reduce the risk of transmission and control the spread of Covid-19.

The donation arrived to Puerto Cortés on 25th September and will be distributed by the Secretary of Health. The PPE items include:

- Type IIR Masks: 48,600
- Gowns: 7,800
- Visors: 3,600
- Aprons: 63,000

The UK and Honduras have been working together to face global issues such as Covid-19. The global pandemic has challenged health systems around the world and the best way to overcome Covid-19 is to stand side by side with international partners.

The British Ambassador to Honduras, Nick Whittingham, said:

We are glad we are able to support Honduras' efforts to continue fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. We know that PPE, as high volume consumption items, are crucial for health systems to work properly. This donation is a great example on how Honduras and the UK can partner and work together to prepare for existing and future global health threats.

The Honduran Secretary of Health, José Manuel Matheu, thanked the United Kingdom for this significant donation that contributes to the protection of frontline personnel, since the support of cooperation from partner countries is essential to strengthen the institutional response, emphasising that "the Government of President Xiomara Castro is focused on humanising health in Honduras by providing quality health care services".

The Sub Secretary for International Cooperation and Promotion, Ambassador Cindy Larissa Rodriguez, on behalf of the solidarity government of President Xiomara Castro, thanked the United Kingdom for supporting the efforts of the People's Government of Honduras:

As a Democratic Government we value the cooperation provided by the British Government by donating medical protection equipment to continue fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, we reiterate our commitment to continue working in coordination with partner countries that are our greatest allies.

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