

This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts' – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, speaking after the vote tonight on the revised Charter for Budget Responsibility, said:

“This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts', as the Chancellor has tonight abolished the OBR's ability to determine when a negative shock occurs. This represents a lack of confidence by the Chancellor in his ability to reach his own targets, as well as a rowing back of the welcome principles the OBR was created for – impartiality and credibility of fiscal policy.

“Instead of less scrutiny by the OBR, Labour would like to see more, such as our call for the Chancellor to give power to the OBR to assess short-medium term policy decisions on health spending. Given the last six years of Tory underfunding in our NHS alongside the Government's denials of the resulting crisis, we need to restore not diminish the public's faith in the Government's spending plans.

“Under this new charter the OBR will assume the role of bystander rather than arbiter of whether or not the economy is facing a negative shock. This is a huge power grab by the Chancellor, as it means he can decide when and what such a “shock” will be, and therefore he can suspend his rules when he likes, and make up his targets as he goes along.

“This Charter also continues with the practice of lumping infrastructure spending in with day-to-day spending, meaning that there will be insufficient scope for investment in our economy, which could hinder growth and therefore our ability to reduce the national debt.

“Despite all the rhetoric of “pressing the reset button”, the Autumn Statement has shown that there would be a continuation of austerity

cuts

to public services. There is still no more money for the NHS and social care crisis, or for ESA and Universal Credit recipients facing cuts.

“Labour’s

Fiscal Credibility Rule would provide the adequate level of investment our economy needs, underpinned by independent oversight coming from both the MPC and a beefed up OBR, which would report to parliament and not the Treasury.”

[Schools are struggling to plug the massive budget deficits created by Tory Government – Angela Rayner](#)

Angela

Rayner MP, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary, ahead of the party’s Opposition Day Debate on schools funding, said:

“Schools are struggling to plug the massive budget deficits created by a Tory Government incapable of running a schools system.

“On Monday we heard from headteachers who are increasingly faced with difficult choices of whether they can afford to have classrooms cleaned, sport pitches mowed or to keep hold of vital support staff who are essential to school communities.

“With three quarters of school budgets taken up by staffing costs, the fear across the sector is that classroom teachers could be cut next.

“At the election the Tories offered warm words to parents about better schools and promised to protect school funding. It is clear that their legacy will now be one of cutting school budgets, super-sized class sizes, and no progress made in the international league tables.

“Our children deserve better.”

After six wasted years of Tory failure on the economy it seems that under Philip Hammond it is only going to get worse – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, responding to the ONS public sector finance figures today, which show the national debt having risen to £1.7 trillion at the end of December 2016, said:

"After six wasted years of Tory failure on the economy it seems that under Philip Hammond it is only going to get worse.

"It appears 2016 was yet another bad year for the national debt with the Tories adding an increase of £91.5 billion, or an average of £251 million each day over the last year: the equivalent of £1,400 per head in the last 12 months.

"Under Hammond's new fiscal rules, presented in the House today, there is insufficient scope for investment in our economy, which will hinder growth and therefore our ability to reduce the national debt.

"Only Labour has a real investment plan underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule to tackle the national debt and to deal with the public finances, so we can transform and rebuild Britain in order that no one and no community is left behind."

The results of this survey expose the failure of our privatised railways – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP,

Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the publication of Transport Focus' National Rail Passenger Survey, revealing significant declines in passenger satisfaction for 2016, said:

"The results of this survey expose the failure of our privatised railways.

With promised upgrades delayed or cancelled and fares rising way ahead of wages, it's disappointing but not surprising to see passenger satisfaction down across the board for 2016.

"With this decline in passenger satisfaction, it's becoming more difficult for the Government to justify allowing private and foreign state-owned companies to take money out of the system that should be used to improve services or hold fares down.

"It's clear that an alternative is needed for Britain's railways. It is time for our railways to be run under public ownership, in the public interest as an integrated national asset in public hands with affordable fares for all and long-term investment in the railway network."

[The Government has today been forced by the Supreme Court to accept the sovereignty of Parliament – Jeremy Corbyn](#)

Jeremy

Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, responding to this morning's judgment from the Supreme Court that Parliament must give its approval to trigger the process of leaving the EU, said:

"The Government has today been forced by the Supreme Court to accept the sovereignty of Parliament.

"Labour respects the result of the referendum and the will of the British people and will not frustrate the process for invoking Article 50.

“However,
Labour will seek to amend the Article 50 Bill to prevent the Conservatives using Brexit to turn Britain into a bargain basement tax haven off the coast of Europe.

“Labour
is demanding a plan from the Government to ensure it is accountable to Parliament throughout the negotiations and a meaningful vote to ensure the final deal is given Parliamentary approval.”