

## [WATCH: The Prime Minister's Commons statement: "We can together make a success of this moment"](#)

Published: March 29, 2017

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## [Teresa Pearce responds to NAO report on 100 per cent business rate retention scheme](#)

**Teresa Pearce, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**, responding to the National Audit Office report on the 100 per cent business rate retention scheme, said:

"Today's report confirms what we have long suspected: the Government is playing dangerous games with local government finances, and in turn, is putting our vital public services in jeopardy.

"The NAO have stated that implementing 100 per cent business rates retention before the Government's Fair Funding Review has been published will result in an untested and potentially unfair system being imposed on already struggling councils. In the context of seven years of brutal and relentless cuts to local government, that is a risk that councils cannot afford. That is why Labour has continually called for 100 per cent business rate retention to be delayed until after the Fair Funding Review is complete.

"The report also finds that the research has not been

done into whether business rate retention is genuinely driving economic growth, and the resources do not exist to do so sufficiently. As it stands, this scheme is ideologically-driven but lacks any solid evidence base.

“Local government is facing a £5.8 billion funding gap by 2020. There is a national crisis in social care with 1.2 million frail elderly people and one in five vulnerable disabled people being left lonely and isolated. Libraries, youth centres and Sure Start centres have closed. Child protection services are creaking, and homelessness is rising. Public services provided by local councils are the lifeblood of our communities and the Government must think more carefully before implementing these potentially catastrophic changes.”

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## [The Government should tackle ‘burning injustices’ many young people face & get on with helping young people find a job – Debbie Abrahams](#)

### **Debbie**

**Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary**, commenting on the Work and Pensions Select Committee’s report on the youth obligation, said:

“The current headline employment figures mask shocking barriers faced by some groups in our society trying to find a job. Sadly there is even evidence of direct discrimination.”

“The Government’s own statistics show a wide gap in employment between different regions, and the evidence points to major disadvantages faced by women, BME groups and disabled people.”

“The Government should stop patting themselves on the back, fix their broken Universal Credit roll out, tackle the ‘burning injustices’ many young people face and get on with helping young people find a job.”

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## [WATCH: Tusk's response to the Article 50 letter. "What can I add to this? We already miss you."](#)

Published: March 29, 2017

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## [Green Party: Triggering of Article 50 sets us on dangerous path towards extreme Brexit](#)



29 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to Article 50 being triggered today.

Molly Scott Cato, MEP for the South West and Green Party EU spokesperson, said:

"The triggering of Article 50 today, after the Bill passed without amendments, sets us on a dangerous path towards an extreme Brexit. The toxic combination of a Conservative Party hell bent on ejecting us into the wilderness and a Labour party utterly unwilling to offer principled opposition has led to this cliff edge, and only a distinct change from both will enable us to avoid the dangers that lie ahead.

“What happens next will define this country for a generation or more, as we enter the most important peacetime negotiations in Britain’s recent history. The Green Party will continue to oppose an extreme Brexit – which is why I have fought against triggering Article 50 every step of the way. We will pressure this Government to guarantee the rights of EU nationals living here, protect our environment and workers’ rights and safeguard our communities from the damaging effects of losing access to EU markets. Alongside Green Parties from across Europe we will continue to make the case for continent-wide solidarity in the face of politicians trying to pull us apart.”

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