

# Labour will support new-tech co-ops to help fight the “Uberisation” of the workplace

John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, speaking at the Open 2017: Platform Cooperatives conference at Goldsmiths University in London today, said:

“The discussion of the challenges for the modern world of work posed by the so called ‘gig economy’ are nothing new. They represent an age-old threat to diminish the hard-won workplace rights, terms and conditions offered by full-time employment.

“However, as technology changes so too does the nature of the threat to job security in the new world of work. That is why it’s exciting to see the ideas and the discussions on how we can help build the economy and society of the future that secures sustainable, well paid jobs.

“Rather than running away from innovation and technological advances, we need to see where we can use them to adapt to the challenges they may present to full-time work.

“The power that these changes in technology give us all is the ability to pool our collective talents and skills and produce wealth not just for the benefit of a tiny handful at the top, but for all of us. It can help us mitigate the potential growth in the ‘Uberisation’ of the workplace.

“Digital technology means there is no longer a convincing reason to allow the wealth of society to be taken by a tiny elite, instead of shared for the many. The old rules about the supposed efficiency of the free market and the private firm are being rewritten right in front of us.

“That’s why the next Labour government will be completely committed to fixing our rigged economy and promoting the co-operative ownership of the wealth we produce, doubling the size of the co-operative sector. We’ll support the development of platform co-operatives instead of allowing new technologies to be exploited for the benefit of an elite few.

“The new National Investment Bank and network of regional development banks will be tasked with supplying the funding to help support a new generation of co-operatively owned Ubers and Airbnbs.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

- For more on the event please see here for more information:  
<https://2017.open.coop>

- Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP speaking at the Open 2017: Platform Cooperatives conference at Goldsmiths University in London today announced Labour's support for platform co-operatives by freeing up funding from the National Investment Bank and regional development banks as part of developing a more entrepreneurial state.
  - As part of Labour's plans to help double the size of the co-operative sector in our economy to £70bn National Investment Bank (NIB) and network of regional development banks will be charged with breaking the existing barriers in the UK financial system that see SMEs and co-operatives unable to access the finance they need to prosper.
  - Labour's NIB and the regional development banks will be explicitly mandated to provide funds to co-operative enterprises with innovative businesses models, including those social enterprises whose websites and apps are designed to minimise the costs of connecting producers with consumers in the transport, accommodation, cultural, catering and other important sectors of the British economy.
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## **Press release: How to fish responsibly during Somerset's elver season**

With the 2017 elver season under way, the Environment Agency is reminding Somerset's elver fishermen to stay the right side of the law.

Eels are an endangered species and recognised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as in need of protection. Fishing for elvers is allowed in England and Wales, but under strict conditions to ensure stocks are not over-exploited.

The elver season runs from 15 February – 25 May inclusive and is largely limited to the Rivers Parrett and Tone. There are approximately 200 licenced elver fishermen in Somerset who must register with the Environment Agency at the start of the season.

Sustainable fishing includes the capture of elvers for re-stocking in countries across Northern Europe where eel stocks have declined and cannot be replenished naturally.

All elver fishing in Somerset is done with hand held nets known as 'dip nets'. They are restricted in size to 1m long, 0.8m wide and 0.45m deep. Handle lengths should be no longer than 4m. Fishing from boats is prohibited and no other large nets or traps are allowed. As a further precaution, all nets must be tagged and fishermen have photographic ID.

Elvers are attracted to fresh water so to protect stocks, no fishing is

permitted within 10m of any river obstruction, dam, inlet, outlet or fish pass that hinders the passage of elvers. A full list of rules can be found in the elver fishing bylaws.

Richard Dearnley for the Environment Agency said:

We recognise the majority of elver fishermen operate responsibly and respect the law. We work closely with the police in detecting illegal fishing and, where we have evidence, won't hesitate to prosecute offenders.

Any illegal or suspicious activity can be reported to the Environment Agency or Crimestoppers. If you would like to report information on environmental crime anonymously, call 0800 555111.

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## China eyes more rural infrastructure investment with PPPs

China will use public-private partnerships (PPP) to boost under-funded rural infrastructure and narrow the urban-rural gap, according to a State Council guideline.

A dynamic financing program that enlists multiple public and private entities will be established by 2020, said the guideline made public on Friday.

Under the program, government spending will be complemented by PPPs to maintain steady investment growth, while state-owned enterprises and other private market players will be encouraged to sponsor the projects.

China has launched many rural infrastructure projects over the last few years but the generally underdeveloped infrastructure in rural areas is holding back the goal to build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way by 2020.

To improve water, road, electricity and communication facilities in rural areas, the government has promised some 3.4 trillion yuan (495.2 billion U.S. dollars) between 2016 and 2020, said Tang Renjian, deputy director of the central rural work leading group.

Only one third of this fund has been secured, however, meaning private investment and PPPs will need to step up, he said, in an earlier elaboration of China's first central policy document in 2017 on rural issues.

PPPs will stimulate investment as the country ensures moderate growth in fiscal support for agriculture and rural areas, Tang said.

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## **Press release: West Midlands company director handed penalty by court for waste offences**

On 16 February 2017, Jaskaran Bhandal, Director of Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, Oak Farm, Kingswinford, West Midlands pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to 1 count of failing to remove waste from the site, and 1 count of operating a waste site without an authorised environmental permit.

Mr Bhandal was fined £1,332, ordered to pay £3,265 in costs, along with a £120 victim surcharge and disqualified from being a company director for 5 years.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency under Section 59(5) and 157 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and contrary to Regulations 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) and 41 (1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Environment Agency Officers had been working with Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd to bring the site into compliance under their environmental permit until it was revoked. This decision was upheld at an appeal made to the Planning Inspectorate, and the company was ordered to remove all the waste from the site by 2 July 2014.

Officers visited the site in November 2015 and saw that significant amounts of new waste had been deposited at the site. Officers made a number of enquires and determined that the waste had been deposited by Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, after their permit had been revoked.

Officers served a Notice to Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd in May 2016 to remove all the illegally deposited waste by 19 November 2016. Officers visited the site on 22 November 2016 and noted some attempts had been made to remove the waste but the vast majority remained in situ.

Mr Bhandal was interviewed and admitted to knowing the site did not hold the relevant permits to carry out the work undertaken, he also accepted he was unable to comply with the Notice served but this was due to financial reasons.

Speaking after the case, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

The successful prosecution of this case should send out a clear message that the Environment Agency is adopting a robust approach

to ensuring those who flout the law are brought to justice. Despite extensive previous efforts to work with the company and seek compliance, it became apparent that prosecution remained the only option to deal with this matter appropriately.

In mitigation, the court heard that the defendant had pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity, had co-operated with the Environment Agency during the interview and that he was sorry for the offences committed.

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## **Xi urges all Chinese to contribute to national rejuvenation**

President Xi Jinping has called for all Chinese, whether at home or abroad, to unite toward achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Xi made the remarks in a written instruction delivered at a national meeting on overseas Chinese affairs held in Beijing Friday.

It has been a key task for the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the state to encourage overseas Chinese as well as returned Chinese and their relatives to play a positive role in realizing the great revival of the Chinese nation, said Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee.

Xi acknowledged that Party committees, governments and authorities working for overseas Chinese affairs at all levels play an important part in protecting the rights of such groups, as they support the nation's development and peaceful reunification, and boost friendly cooperation between China and other countries.

Xi called on people working for overseas Chinese affairs to make the most of the strength of returned overseas Chinese and those still residing abroad, in a bid to make greater contribution to realizing the country's "two centenary goals" and the Chinese dream of great national renewal.

Premier Li Keqiang called on government departments in charge of overseas Chinese affairs to unite closely around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core throughout the 13th Five-Year Plan period, urging them to play a greater role in national economic and social development and in promoting national reunification, according to his written instruction read at the same meeting.

The meeting also honored outstanding entities and individuals from overseas Chinese affairs authorities nationwide.