

Speech: Queen's Speech 2017

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons.

My government's priority is to secure the best possible deal as the country leaves the European Union. My ministers are committed to working with Parliament, the devolved administrations, business and others to build the widest possible consensus on the country's future outside the European Union.

A bill will be introduced to repeal the European Communities Act and provide certainty for individuals and businesses. This will be complemented by legislation to ensure that the United Kingdom makes a success of Brexit, establishing new national policies on immigration, international sanctions, nuclear safeguards, agriculture, and fisheries.

My government will seek to maintain a deep and special partnership with European allies and to forge new trading relationships across the globe. New bills on trade and customs will help to implement an independent trade policy, and support will be given to help British businesses export to markets around the world.

My ministers will strengthen the economy so that it supports the creation of jobs and generates the tax revenues needed to invest in the National Health Service, schools, and other public services.

My government will continue to improve the public finances, while keeping taxes low. It will spread prosperity and opportunity across the country through a new modern, industrial strategy.

My government will work to attract investment in infrastructure to support economic growth. Legislation will be introduced to ensure the United Kingdom remains a world leader in new industries, including electric cars and commercial satellites. A new bill will also be brought forward to deliver the next phase of high-speed rail.

My government will continue to work to ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend a good school and that all schools are fairly funded. My ministers will work to ensure people have the skills they need for the high-skilled, high-wage jobs of the future, including through a major reform of technical education.

The National Living Wage will be increased so that people who are on the lowest pay benefit from the same improvements in earnings as higher paid workers. My ministers will seek to enhance rights and protections in the modern workplace.

My government will make further progress to tackle the gender pay gap and discrimination against people on the basis of their race, faith, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Legislation will be brought forward to protect the victims of domestic

violence and abuse.

My government will reform mental health legislation and ensure that mental health is prioritised in the National Health Service in England.

Proposals will be brought forward to ban unfair tenant fees, promote fairness and transparency in the housing market, and help ensure more homes are built.

My ministers will work to improve social care and will bring forward proposals for consultation.

My government will ensure fairer markets for consumers, this will include bringing forward measures to help tackle unfair practices in the energy market to help reduce energy bills.

A priority will be to build a more united country, strengthening the social, economic and cultural bonds between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

My government will work in cooperation with the devolved administrations, and it will work with all of the parties in Northern Ireland to support the return of devolved government.

A new law will ensure that the United Kingdom retains its world-class regime protecting personal data, and proposals for a new digital charter will be brought forward to ensure that the United Kingdom is the safest place to be online.

Legislation will also be introduced to modernise the courts system and to help reduce motor insurance premiums.

My government will initiate a full public inquiry into the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower to ascertain the causes, and ensure that the appropriate lessons are learnt.

To support victims, my government will take forward measures to introduce an independent public advocate, who will act for bereaved families after a public disaster and support them at public inquests.

My ministers will continue to invest in our gallant Armed Forces, meeting the NATO commitment to spend at least two per cent of national income on defence, and delivering on the Armed Forces Covenant across the United Kingdom.

My government will bring forward proposals to ensure that critical national infrastructure is protected to safeguard national security.

A commission for countering extremism will be established to support the government in stamping out extremist ideology in all its forms, both across society and on the internet, so it is denied a safe space to spread.

In the light of the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, my government's counter-terrorism strategy will be reviewed to ensure that the police and security services have all the powers they need, and that the

length of custodial sentences for terrorism-related offences are sufficient to keep the population safe.

My ministers will ensure that the United Kingdom's leading role on the world stage is maintained and enhanced as it leaves the European Union.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, committed to spending zero point seven per cent of national income on international development, my government will continue to drive international efforts that increase global security and project British values around the world.

My government will work to find sustainable political solutions to conflicts across the Middle East. It will work to tackle the threat of terrorism at source by continuing the United Kingdom's leading role in international military action to destroy Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It will also lead efforts to reform the international system to improve the United Kingdom's ability to tackle mass migration, alleviate poverty, and end modern slavery.

My government will continue to support international action against climate change, including the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Prince Philip and I look forward to welcoming Their Majesties King Felipe and Queen Letizia of Spain on a State Visit in July.

My government will host the Commonwealth Summit in April of next year to cement its relevance to this, and future generations.

Members of the House of Commons:

Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons:

Other measures will be laid before you.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

Press release: May 2017 Transaction Data

The Transaction Data shows HM Land Registry completed 1,620,802 applications from its customers in May. This included 1,595,183 applications by account holders, of which:

1. Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The June Transaction Data will be published at 11am on Friday 21 July 2017 at [HM Land](#)

[Registry Monthly Property Transaction Data.](#)

2. The monthly Transaction Data shows how many applications for first registrations, leases, transfers of part, dealings, official copies and searches lodged by HM Land Registry account customers were completed. For an explanation of the terms used, see [abbreviations used in the Transaction Data](#).
3. Transactions for value include freehold and leasehold sales.
4. Most searches carried out by a solicitor or conveyancer are to protect the purchase and/or mortgage. For example, a search will give the buyer priority for an application to HM Land Registry to register the purchase of the property.
5. As a government department established in 1862, executive agency and trading fund responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HM Land Registry keeps and maintains the Land Register for England and Wales. The Land Register has been open to public inspection since 1990.
6. With the largest transactional database of its kind detailing more than 24 million titles, HM Land Registry underpins the economy by safeguarding ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property.
7. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
8. Follow us on:

[Speech: British Ambassador's speech at The Queen's Birthday Party 2017 in Thailand](#)

Thank you for joining us to congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on her 91st Birthday. And to celebrate the relationship between the UK and Thailand which is now entering its 5th Century.

Thank you all for coming tonight and particular thanks also to our generous

Thai and British company sponsors.

We will now hear our two Anthems performed by the children of St Regents School Bangkok.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our theme this evening is “Partnerships for a New Generation”. “New Generation” being not just about youth but about a new wave of innovation, research, education, trade and investment, which will form the basis of a dynamic modern partnership between the UK and Thailand.

A partnership that already sees the UK as one of the leading European investors in Thailand with a stock of c. £9 billion. And Thai investment in the UK on the increase. That sees many famous British brands already here – and represented tonight. And many more looking to use Thailand as their springboard into the ASEAN – attracted by the ambition of Thailand 4.0.

A partnership that sees the UK committing a further £9 million under the Newton Fund – to support the continued excellence of the UK /Thailand research base and innovation ecosystem.

And a partnership that this year celebrates the 65th Anniversary of British Council in Thailand. And which will further our strong collaboration on education and culture

Tonight, we are very pleased to have a range of showcases which describe our commitment to creating “Partnerships for a New Generation” and especially the four international schools here tonight – Harrow, Shrewsbury, St Regents and St Andrews – whose students and showcases truly epitomise our theme.

Please enjoy this evening – and our fantastic jazz band, from Harrow School.

Press release: Showcasing our cool kit at London Rivers Week

On Tuesday 27 June from 12pm to 3pm at Walthamstow Marshes, near Springfield Marina, the Environment Agency will be showcasing their cool kit and little critters as part of London Rivers Week.

London Rivers Week is running again this year with Catchment Partnerships and environmental organisations such as Thames21, ZSL, London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and the South East Rivers Trust, putting on public events, walks and talks at special river sites.

Amanda MacLean, Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency, said:

We are very excited to be showcasing our work at the London Rivers Week this year on the 27 June. Over the last 20 years the Environment Agency has made big steps to improve the quality of water in rivers. Please do come along to find out about the wide variety of ways in which we work to create a better place for people and the environment. We're bringing lots of our cool kit for you to see.

The Environment Agency will have demonstrations of flood risk management equipment, including their:

- weed cutting boat
- flood water pumps and aerators (in and by the river)
- incident response vehicle, and
- temporary flood barrier.

Members of the public can talk to staff and find out about the following activities:

- monitoring the health of our rivers; trays of invertebrates will be on display
- invasive species
- pollution incidents
- flood risk management; including how we work with communities to reduce flood risk, and
- general information about our other activities and work with partners such as LVRPA (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority).

Other exciting events the Environment Agency is running during London Rivers Week include:

- 4pm to 6pm Monday 26 June at Watling Park, Burnt Oak, HA8 0RF at the northern entrance off Abbots Road.
- 12pm on Tuesday 27 June at the Strand on Kew Green.
- 11:30am on Wednesday 28 June at the River Wandle, Merton High Street, Colliers Wood.

More details and a full list of events can be found on the [official website](#).

Press release: Wiltshire man handed suspended prison sentence for running illegal waste activity

Mr. Robert Cooper, 78, of Hicks Leaze Farm, Chelworth appeared at Swindon

Magistrates Court on Monday 5 June 2017 for operating a regulated waste facility without the necessary environmental permit (contrary to regulations 12 (1)(a) and 38 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010) at the Farm between 9 April 2014 and 10 July 2014.

The defendant had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing on 15 May but the case was adjourned for a pre-sentence report due to the facts of the case and his previous waste offences.

Mr Cooper was given a 12 week prison sentence, suspended for 2 years and ordered to perform 200 hours of unpaid work. The court also ordered Mr Cooper to pay the Environment Agency's full costs of £13,027.35

Mr Howard McCann prosecuting, told the court how the Environment Agency started investigations following complaints from members of the public about the burning of material in December 2013, and the sheer number of lorries dumping waste on site from April 2014 onwards.

Environment Agency officers visited the site and witnessed large quantities of waste including 4 large mounds of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, the largest of which was measured at approximately 65 metres long, 7 metres high in places and between 5 to 7 metres wide. Officers estimate a total of about 8,285 cubic metres of waste on site. The farm is about the size of 9 football pitches. Mr Cooper allowed people to tip their mixed waste for up to £40 per load, treated it by sorting the materials and then burning some of it.

Mr Cooper charged people between £10 (green waste) and £40 per 20-tonne load (C&D waste). Given the main waste mounds discovered by officers, they calculated that Mr Cooper could have made more than £23,000 from his illegal activities. The court found that Mr Cooper's actions were deliberate and that the environmental harm was localised due to the presence of plasterboard, chemical drums and leachate seen on site. The justices also found that the offending was repeated and for financial gain. The court gave Mr Cooper credit for his early guilty plea and co-operation with the Environment Agency throughout its investigation.

Checks with the Environment Agency's public register confirmed that he did not have a permit for the site, and although he did have 6 waste exemptions, none of these would have allowed him to carry out the types of activities seen by officers.

All waste activities are regulated by the Environment Agency. Whenever waste is stored or treated, the operator is required to hold an environmental permit or register for an exemption, which is reserved for low-risk waste activities only.

During site visits, Environment Agency officers observed the burning of waste with discarded empty containers labelled as "dangerous to the environment". One officer experienced a strong acrid smell which made him feel so unwell that he had to use a protective dust mask. The officers saw what appeared to be leachate puddles in and around the burning waste and plasterboard, which

cannot be disposed of to landfill with other biodegradable waste as it can produce toxic hydrogen sulphide gas.

Steve Clare of the Environment Agency said:

It is very disappointing that Mr Cooper continued to allow the operation of an illegal site despite his previous convictions.

The net is closing in on people who think they can make easy money undercutting legitimate waste businesses by putting the local environment at risk. We are constantly gathering information on illegal waste sites, criminal activities and environmental crime in Wiltshire and across the south east.

We are taking a zero tolerance approach against offenders. In cases like this where individuals consistently operate illegally, we have absolutely no hesitation in prosecuting them, as we want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

This extends to landowners, and their agents, who fail to take steps to prevent such offences once they are made aware of them.

For all media enquiries, please call 0800 141 2743.