

It is imperative that the warm words in Michael Gove's speech today are followed by robust action – Sue Hayman

Sue Hayman MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, responding to the speech given by Michael Gove MP today, said:

“It is imperative that the warm words in Michael Gove's speech today are followed by robust action, and we will hold the Government's feet to the fire to ensure that they deliver on their promises when it comes to the environment, agriculture and fisheries. Gove has been notoriously dismissive of expert advice in the past, so Labour will closely watch that he follows the science when it comes to our precious environment.

“The agricultural sector needs long-term certainty post-Brexit. Gove says he wants to continue supporting farmers after we leave the Common Agricultural Policy, but we must get the detail on this as soon as possible, so that farmers can plan for the future.

“Britain must lead by example when it comes to tackling climate change. We welcome the Environment Secretary denouncing President Trump's reckless and irresponsible approach to climate change and the Paris Agreement. Labour wants to see EU environmental protections transposed into British law and strengthened where necessary. We will not allow the Government to use Brexit as an excuse to attempt to water down this important legislation.

“We must champion sustainable farming and fishing by investing in and promoting skills, technology, market access and innovation. Labour in government will reconfigure farming and fisheries subsidies on the basis of environmental management, innovation, and productivity – not just the amount of land you own – and reconfigure funds for farming to support smaller traders, local economies, community benefits and sustainable practices.”

Today's warning from NATS is yet another example of the Government's failure – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the warning from the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) over airspace, said:

“The Government’s approach to aviation has been to rely on autopilot while they have a chat among themselves. Labour has been pressing for action for years on aviation safety, drones and airspace modernisation: the Government say they are in listening mode but it seems they’re not listening to anyone in the industry.

“Today’s warning from NATS is yet another example of the Government’s failure to act and comes as uncertainty over Brexit is threatening the UK aviation industry. The Government must listen to what NATS and the industry more broadly are warning and take action to protect and modernise UK airspace.

“The Government must also urgently provide clarity on our post-Brexit relationship with the European agencies that maintain aviation safety standards and through which our air service agreements are secured. If the Government continue to fail to address the challenges facing the aviation industry, the UK’s connectivity, competitiveness and ability to trade will be severely undermined.”

John McDonnell response to latest ONS Public Sector Finance figures

John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, commenting on the latest Public Sector Finance figures published this morning by the ONS, which show that £128.5 billion was added to the national debt since June 2016 and public sector net borrowing increased by £2 billion last month compared with June 2016, said:

“These figures reveal the continued failure of Philip Hammond and the Conservatives. Seven years of Tory cuts have left our economy weaker with falling wages, yet the deficit has not been eliminated two years after they claimed it would be, and the national debt continues to rise.

“The Chancellor should stop handing out massive tax giveaways to big businesses and the super-rich, and instead give our hard-pressed public sector workers a pay rise; so we can end the travesty in our country of nurses having to rely on food banks.

“Only a Labour Government will set out a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to help build the high wage, high skill economy of the future for the many not the few.”

That there are apprentices who are paid less than minimum wage is unacceptable – Rebecca Long-Bailey

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, responding to reports that nearly one in five apprentices are being paid less than the minimum wage, said:

“That there are apprentices who are paid less than minimum wage is unacceptable, that the practice is on the rise is shocking.

“The Government has not taken sufficient steps to enforce payment of the minimum wage. Employment rights are only safe in Labour hands.”

Sharon Hodgson response to recent developments on the inquiry into the Contaminated Blood Scandal

Sharon Hodgson MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Public Health, responding to recent developments on the inquiry into the Contaminated Blood Scandal, said:

“The Government is running roughshod over the affected community, who have campaigned for justice for so long.

“The community have not been sufficiently consulted on the terms of reference of the inquiry and the Government has left open the possibility that the Department of Health could lead on it, despite the Department's role in the contaminated blood scandal.

“Over recent days there has been growing opposition from the affected community, campaigners, organisations and

MPs from across Parliament. The Department of Health should have no involvement in the inquiry and it should be transferred to another Department.

"Ministers must now keep their promises, place the affected community genuinely at the centre of this inquiry, and ensure their views are taken seriously."