

BREXIT LIVE: May braces for BREXIT SHOWDOWN - PM to face hardliners in CRUNCH meeting

THERESA May has confirmed she will be meeting with the Conservatives' backbench 1922 Committee tomorrow. The Prime Minister will meet with angry Tory MP's following heavy criticism of her handling of Brexit negotiations.

A senior Tory source said: "She is going and taking the opportunity to talk to colleagues."

Confirmation of her attendance came amid reports that the number of Conservative MPs submitting letters calling for Mrs May's removal was approaching the 48 needed to trigger a no-confidence vote in her leadership.

Today the Prime Minister ordered ministers to prepare weekly updates on preparations for Brexit - either with or without a deal.

The updates will be delivered at the regular Cabinet meeting by Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab, who told ministers on Tuesday that "good progress" was being made on preparing for both possibilities.

Earlier it was revealed Tory rebels could be one step closer to ousting their Prime Minister after Boris Johnson became the latest MP to publicly declare his alliance to a campaign group dedicated to wrecking Theresa May's exit plans.

The former Foreign Secretary is the 44th Conservative critic to back Stand up 4 Brexit, which campaigns to ditch all EU negotiations to date and ultimately crash out of Brussels with no-deal.

Boris Johnson's move comes amid reports that the number of Conservative MPs submitting letters calling for her removal was approaching the 48 needed to trigger a no confidence vote in the Tory leader.

As Mrs May urged Tory MPs to "focus on the prize" of Brexit, Mr Johnson maintained pressure by attacking the prime minister's Chequers deal, saying: "We wouldn't control our Laws, and we certainly wouldn't be able to do proper

Free Trade Deals.

“It is a cheat and a fraud on those who voted to leave.”

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Stand Up 4 Brexit supporters include Mr Johnson's ally Conor Burns and former ministers David Davis, Priti Patel, Iain Duncan Smith, Owen Paterson, John Whittingdale and David Jones.

The group pledges to fight plans to keep EU rules on British goods, the Northern Ireland "backstop" plan and free movement.

Theresa May told MPs on Monday the terms of Britain's withdrawal from the EU were 95 percent agreed but that the "sticking point" remained the issue of the Irish border.

However, the prime minister came under fire from critics on all sides in the Commons after she confirmed that she could accept a short extension to the transition period after the UK leaves in order to secure a final settlement.



Brexit news: Theresa May to meet with the 1922 committee tomorrow (Image: GETTY)

Both Tory Brexiteers and Remainers expressed concern that it could leave the country trapped indefinitely in a transitional arrangement with no say in the rules governing it.

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10.40pm update: Queen speaks out on Brexit

The Queen has spoken publicly about for the first time, telling the King of the Netherlands that “as we look toward a new partnership with Europe” the values shared by the UK and Holland “are our greatest assets”.

9.12pm update: Transport secretary preparing for a range of scenarios in case of no-deal

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling had discussed the possibility of hiring entire vessels, or securing space in ships, to bring food, medicines and other supplies in through alternative ports.

A Department for Transport spokesman said: “We remain confident of reaching an agreement with the EU, but it is only sensible for government and industry to

prepare for a range of scenarios.

“We are continuing to work closely with partners on contingency plans to ensure that trade can continue to move as freely as possible between the UK and Europe.”

7.32pm update: Patients may need to stockpile medicine if there is a no-deal Brexit

A top healthcare professional has suggested people may need to stockpile medicine in January if a Brexit deal is not reached, despite reassurances from the Health Secretary.

Martin Sawyer, executive director of the Healthcare Distribution Association is “very concerned” about the way the Prime Minister is handling negotiations with the EU.

He said: “We need politicians to understand that there could be consequences of a no-deal and those are the consequences.

“We are not suggesting anybody needs to stockpile outside of the supply chain yet, but come January that might be a different picture.”

Earlier Defence Secretary, Matt Hancock played down any fears and was “confident” there would not be any issues.

He said: “I am confident that if everybody does what they need to do that we will have unhindered flow of medicines and supply of medical devices that we want to see.”

6.58pm update: King of the Netherlands weighs in on Brexit during state visit

The King of the Netherlands has urged the UK Government to lift the “shadow of uncertainty” hanging over Dutch nationals living in Britain after Brexit.

Willem-Alexander said “it truly saddens us” to see Britain leave the European Union, but respected the decision, in an address to Parliament during his state visit.

Speaking in the Royal Gallery in the Palace of Westminster, he said: “Many of

them have lived and worked here for many years.

“They feel at home in their local community and their contribution to society is valued, whether as employees, colleagues, neighbours or volunteers.

“Every day they prove how good the match is between the British and the Dutch.

“Yet all these individuals now live under the shadow of uncertainty about their future status.”

5.55pm update: MP’s warn the Government may not have enough time for a no-deal Brexit

A committee of MP’s have warned the government there may not be “sufficient time and political goodwill” to make arrangement for a no-deal Brexit.

The Commons European Scrutiny Committee maintain belief that leaving the single market and customs union on March 29 “remains a distinct possibility” but are concerned this will be “extremely disruptive for many sectors of the economy”.

The report said: “While we agree that it would be in both sides’ interest to avoid the worst disruption in the event of an exit without a withdrawal agreement, we note that the Exiting the EU Committee has questioned the Government’s approach of expecting there to be sufficient time and political goodwill to negotiate bilateral contingency measures.”

4.48pm update: Theresa May to attend meeting with 1922 committee tomorrow

Chief Political Correspondent of the Telegraph, Christopher Hope has confirmed Mrs May will meet with Tory backbenchers.

He tweeted: “CONFIRMED PM Theresa May will face down her critics at the 1922 committee tomorrow afternoon.”

3.34pm update: Health Secretary plays down fears no-deal Brexit will stockpile medicine

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has dismissed claims that fears over a no-deal Brexit have led him to push for drug companies to stockpile vital medicines for 20

weeks rather than six.

During the summer as a precaution drug companies were told to ensure they have an additional six-week supply of drugs in the event of disruption caused by a no-deal Brexit.

However Mr Hancock has rejected the claims as “not true” when asked in the House of Commons.

He said: “We are working very closely with the pharmaceutical industry to make sure in the event of a no-deal Brexit, which I regard as unlikely, that we mitigate as much as possible the impact on the supply of medicines and that the supply of medicines can be unhindered.”

2.01pm update: Theresa May has attended her weekly Cabinet meeting at Number 10

Ministers at the regular weekly meeting discussed the importance the UK Government places on strengthening the Union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The discussion comes amid growing speculation about the possible impact of Brexit on the Union, with SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon saying that EU withdrawal made a second referendum on Scottish independence more likely.

Scotland Secretary David Mundell reportedly joined Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson in writing a letter to Theresa May warning that they could not support a Brexit deal which undermines the Union by making different arrangements for Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK.

Speaking at Cabinet, the Prime Minister said: “We are stronger as a Union of nations, respecting and celebrating the rich cultural, economic and social benefits that each constituent part brings.”

1.21pm update: Brexit ANGER as Leo Varadkar claims UK may need BAILOUT after leaving EU

Mr Varadkar has sparked fury after he fired an undiplomatic dig at Britain by claiming it may need a financial bailout after Brexit.

aoiseach Mr Varadkar faced criticism for being “petty” and “un-statesmanlike” after his jibe as he responded to a Twitter user who sent him a foul-mouthed message, citing loans the UK had given to Ireland during the financial crisis.

The social media user, who has 28 followers, posted: “What the f*** can you, a country who borrowed millions off the UK, just to survive, offer anybody, you are having a laugh, another bad Irish joke.”

Replying, Mr Varadkar appeared to mock post-Brexit Britain as he suggested Ireland is ready to come to the UK’s rescue if it suffers a financial meltdown after its exit from the EU.

He posted on Twitter: “Have paid back all we borrowed from IMF.

“Ireland has no budget deficit now and we have a Rainy Day Fund.

“Happy to do same for UK and help them out financially in the future if they need it for some reason...”

Furious Twitter users quickly attacked the Irish leader for “sneering at neighbours and friends” and urged him to stay away from “keyboard battles”.

12.23pm update: A BBC journalist has dismissed claims letters have been sent demanding a leadership contest

Norman Smith tweeted: “Calm down everyone...just been told 48 letters have not been posted demanding leadership contest.”

11.34am update: Irish premier Leo Varadkar comments on May’s idea for ‘backstop’

He said the UK Government will not want to move away from its commitments to the backstop agreement.

The Taoiseach said he has “every confidence” the British Government will honour its commitment to the Irish border.

Speaking on Tuesday, Mr Varadkar said: “From our point of view, what Ireland is looking for is what we have always been looking for from day one and what has been committed to by us and the UK Government in principle and in writing on a number of occasions now.

“That is, we have a backstop that gives us an assurance that there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland no matter what happens, that that backstop is legally operable and that applies unless and until there is a new agreement.

“That is something that the UK Government has committed to in principle, committed to in writing, and I have every confidence that the UK Government will honour that commitment.

“Britain is an important country, a serious country, a great country with great history. I don’t think they will want to be moving away from their commitment.”

11.07am update: Police will be ‘seriously impacted’ by no-deal Brexit

NCA director-general Lynne Owens said she was “deeply concerned” that withdrawal from the EU without a deal could deprive UK police of the use of tools like the European Arrest Warrant and the shared Schengen Information System law enforcement database.

Ms Owens also warned that the structure of policing in England and Wales was getting in the way of fighting modern problems like cyber-crime, human trafficking, modern slavery, child abuse and “county lines” operations taking drugs from the cities to smaller towns.

She called for changes to “layer” policing at local, regional and national levels to ensure that all aspects are sufficiently resourced.

10.46am update: Conservative MP Andrew Bridgen has denied being the source of anonymous quotes suggesting May be “knifed”

Mr Bridgen told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme: “It’s not me. I have no idea who it was. I don’t normally hide behind anonymous quotes. I think these sorts of comments are unproductive.”

The Leicestershire North-West MP, who submitted a letter of no confidence in Theresa May in July, said: “We either change the Prime Minister’s policy or we have to change the Prime Minister.

“Toppling the Prime Minister isn’t the only solution.

“The Prime Minister could pivot away from the Chequers deal which is deeply

unpopular in the country and doesn't deliver the Brexit we promised.”



Brexit news: Theresa May said the Brexit deal is 95 percent done (Image: GETTY)

10.11am update: Emergency powers may be needed to ensure patients can still get the medicines they need after a no-deal Brexit - warning

The Healthcare Distribution Association, which represents private companies supplying more than 90 percent of the medicines used in the NHS, warned that regulatory problems and transport hold-ups could result in drug shortages in the UK.

They are calling for pharmacists to be given greater powers to respond to shortages, and for changes to distribution licences to streamline the system.

Martin Sawer, executive director of the Healthcare Distribution Association, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "A no-deal, we believe, would require some sort of temporary emergency powers to ensure consistent supply to patients in the UK, because 50% of the medicines in a typical warehouse of a wholesaler has touched the EU at some point or other before getting to the UK.

"It's a problem about aligning regulations to start with. That creates an ease of transport.

“It’s also a logistics issue about all the transport infrastructure being tied up in Calais, trying to get into France, that we need to get back here.”

9.24am update: Watchdog warns host of measures to prepare the UK border for Brexit may not be ready for a no-deal scenario

The Government faces a race against time to replace critical IT systems, boost Border Force staffing levels and build new infrastructure to track goods, according to the National Audit Office.

It said effective management of the border is “fundamentally important” and highlighted the potential for crime gangs to exploit any gaps.

Sir Amyas Morse, the head of the NAO, said: “Government has openly accepted the border will be sub-optimal if there is no deal with the EU on 29 March 2019.

“It is not clear what sub-optimal means in practice, or how long this will last.

9.06am update: Brexiteer’s stern warning to EU

John Redwood warned Brussels they will be left emptyhanded if they continue to be “dogmatic and inflexible” against the UK in the Brexit negotiations.

Speaking to Channel 4 News, the leading Brexiteer warned the UK would end up leaving the European Union under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules regaining full independence from the Brussels bloc while the EU will get “the opposite of what they want”.

Mr Redwood argued so far the UK has already achieved the Brexit Britons voted for thanks to two important pieces of legislation approved by Parliament.

9am update: Guy Verhofstadt tells May to FORGET time-limited backstop

The EU Parliament’s Brexit co-ordinator said MEPs would vote against any deal that doesn’t contain a “real backstop”.

He also suggested Mrs May was rowing back on previous promises to include the so-called backstop in the withdrawal agreement by now demanding a time-limited solution to the vexed issue of the Irish border.

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8.48am update: Iain Duncan Smith reveals what really happened in secret Brexit meeting with Barnier

Iain Duncan Smith said the plans, which he discussed with EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier in a private meeting yesterday, required “goodwill and cooperation” but no “special measures” such as new technology – as is currently proposed by Mrs May’s Chequers plan.

Mr Duncan Smith said Mr Barnier would “listen to ideas from all sides” but stressed he was “not negotiating” on the government’s behalf and rejected a suggestion from a Good Morning Britain anchor that the meeting was “secret”.

8.41am update: Germany has demanded Remainers be given a second referendum

Former Secretary of State Sigmar Gabriel waded into the deadlocked Brexit negotiations by suggesting Prime Minister Theresa May’s answer to stalled talks would be to give Remainers a second vote.

Mr Gabriel outlined a handful of bizarre points he believed made the Brexit ballot illegitimate, such as how teenage Britons too young to vote in the June 2016

referendum would now - according to him - almost certainly vote Remain in a second referendum.

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1035171/brexit-news-latest-update-theresa-may-boris-johnson-eu-uk-deal-latest>

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