

**Boris Johnson's leaked plan to sort Brexit flops as Dublin dismiss it in minutes; Boris Johnson today confirmed he will make a 'very good offer' to the EU 'very soon' -but Ireland poured cold water on the plans saying the border 'deserved better'**

mirror.co.uk

October 1, 2019 Tuesday 3:50 AM GMT

Copyright 2019 Trinity Mirror, Plc. All Rights Reserved



**Section:** POLITICS; Version:6

**Length:** 908 words

**Byline:** By, Aine McMahon & Dan Bloom

## **Body**

---

Boris Johnson's leaked draft plan to solve Brexit has been furiously dismissed by the Irish government just hours before he finally reveals it.

Boris Johnson today confirmed he will make a "very good offer" to the EU "very soon" to try to get a deal -less than a month before the October 31 deadline.

But he is already facing an angry backlash over proposals leaked overnight for the Irish **border**.

According to RTE, a paper suggested there will be "customs clearance centres" 5 to 10 miles back from Northern Ireland's **border** with the Republic.

Mr Johnson today said that leak was "not quite right", out of date, and a string of **border** posts is "not what we're proposing at all".

But it was too late to stop deputy Irish premier Simon Coveney -who poured cold water on the plans saying both sides of the **border** "**deserve** better."

And Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald said the leaked proposals would "essentially" be a return to a hard **border** in Ireland that will "sabotage" the peace process.

Ruling out backing such a plan, she said: "What has been described in this document is essentially a hard **border** on the island of Ireland.

"Anything that causes there to be customs, tariffs, checks anywhere represents a hardening of the **border**."

Mr Johnson did not provide full details of his Brexit plan this morning in a round of media interviews.

He said it was "absolutely not" true that he wanted to simply move **border** checks away from the physical **border**.

Boris Johnson's leaked plan to sort Brexit flops as Dublin dismiss it in minutes; Boris Johnson today confirmed he will make a 'very good offer' to the EU 'very....

"There are very good reasons why that would not be a good idea... both for practical reasons and reasons of sentiment that we totally understand," he told the BBC.

But he admitted it was a "reality" that some checks would be needed to create a "single customs territory" for the UK once it leaves the EU.

The Prime Minister is expected to make a full offer to the EU in the next few days.

He added "this is the moment when the rubber hits the road" and "this is where the hard yards are in the course of the negotiations."

Irish State broadcaster RTE reported the suggestion sent to the European Union by the UK would lead to the posts being built between five and 10 miles back from the current **border**.

The idea for the customs posts are contained in the so-called 'non-papers' submitted by UK officials during recent technical discussions.

Simon Coveney, Ireland's deputy PM, tweeted: "Non-Paper = Non-Starter. Time the EU had a serious proposal from the UK Govt if a £ Brexit deal is to be achievable in October. NI and IRE **deserves** better!"

Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer tweeted: "If Boris Johnson had spent any time listening to businesses and communities in Northern Ireland, he would know that these proposals are utterly unworkable."

Opposition political parties across the Irish Sea also criticised the reported plans.

Lisa Chambers, the Fianna Fail Brexit spokeswoman tweeted: "This is effectively a **border** with a buffer zone and is clearly not a satisfactory alternative to the backstop.

"With 30 days now to go until Brexit we need to see sensible workable solutions that ensure no hard **border** on the island of Ireland. What about regulations on goods"

"For all the U.K. governments talk that they wouldn't erect a **border** on the island of Ireland, here they are proposing a **border** as a solution to their £Brexit paralysis," she tweeted.

Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald tweeted: "It is further evidence of Tory recklessness and belligerence towards Ireland."

Irish Labour Party Leader Brendan Howlin also dismissed the plans.

He tweeted: "Leaked proposals from the UK on alternatives to the backstop are completely unacceptable. The UK is well aware that a mass of new **border** checks, wherever sited, breach the agreement reached with the May government to avoid regulatory barriers to trade."

SDLP Leader Colum Eastwood said the reported proposals fall short of fulfilling the objective of the backstop.

"The content of these proposals fails to meet the British Government's obligations under the December 2017 joint report to avoid physical infrastructure, checks and controls at the **border**. It doesn't matter if it's a mile, five miles or ten miles away, the presence of physical checks will create economic and security challenges that are unacceptable," he said.

Separately, the Irish Farmer's Association President Joe Healy said the reported proposal by the UK to install custom clearance centres' at both sides of the **border** is not a credible alternative to the backstop.

"These customs clearance centres' are **border** posts under a different name. The purpose of the backstop is to act as a fallback in the event that a future trade deal cannot address the NI **Border** issue to the UK and EU's

Boris Johnson's leaked plan to sort Brexit flops as Dublin dismiss it in minutes; Boris Johnson today confirmed he will make a 'very good offer' to the EU 'very....

satisfaction. This latest proposal is an attempt to put lipstick on a pig. A customs post is a customs post, no matter what is called or where it's located," he said.

The Tory Justice Secretary also played down the leaked plans.

Robert Buckland told Sky News: "They're very much preliminary documents.

"And when it comes to the Irish **border** they only cover a part of the settlement of that **border**.

"I don't think that by any means this is the be all and end all of what I hope will be detailed negotiations over the next couple of weeks.

"I hear what the Irish have had to say about it and quite clearly there is work to be done.

"But let's not pretend these documents are a final piece in the jigsaw.

"I very much hope the negotiations will be conducted away from the gaze of the cameras."

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper; Web Publication

**Journal Code:** WEBDMI

**Subject:** BREXIT (89%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL **BORDERS** (89%); **BORDER** CONTROL (86%); EUROPEAN UNION (78%); EXCISE & CUSTOMS (69%); TARIFFS & DUTIES (64%); ISLANDS & REEFS (62%); INTERVIEWS (61%); PEACE PROCESS (50%)

**Person:** BORIS JOHNSON (90%)

**Geographic:** IRELAND (91%); NORTHERN IRELAND (79%); UNITED KINGDOM (79%); EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES (69%)

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2019