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Under a motion approved by the Commons, spending on international development would only be returned to that level if the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) believes the UK is not borrowing to finance day-to-day spending and underlying debt is falling.

MPs voted by 333 to 298 in favour of the motion despite significant opposition including from the former International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell.

Bishop John, the Church of England's lead bishop for international development, said the test could be so stringent that it risked making the cut "permanent".

He said: "I am very disappointed that Parliament has not seen fit to honour this country's laudable promise, enshrined in law, to devote 0.7 percent of GNI to aid.

"As Andrew Mitchell commented this morning, it is not right that the world's poorest should be the only ones to suffer from a reduction in spending following the pandemic.

"The commitment was one of which the Conservative party could be proud and I hope it will be restored very soon.

"It is a matter of some concern that the criteria which the Government has now set out for a return to 0.7 per cent are so stringent that it risks making permanent rather than temporary the reduction in our overseas development."

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