

Subject:	BHCC Brexit Resilience & Planning		
Date of Meeting:	23rd January 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law (Monitoring Officer)		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the council's planning activity in preparation for the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
- 1.2 The report highlights updates to key areas of monitoring and development for the council related to Brexit.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees to formal updates on the council's preparations for the UK's withdrawal from the EU to be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee on a quarterly basis throughout 2020.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

National Position

- 3.1 In October 2019 the EU granted the UK an extension to the leave date to 31st January 2020. In the intervening time a General Election was called for 12th December with the outcome being a Conservative Parliamentary majority which subsequently allowed the passing of the EU (UK Withdrawal) Bill through the 1st and 2nd Readings in the House of Commons. It is expected that the Bill will receive Royal Assent and agreement from the European Parliament and the UK will therefore leave the EU on 31st January 2020.
- 3.2 The UK and EU will then enter into a transition period which is expected to last until 31st December 2020. This time will be used to negotiate a new trade and security relationship between the UK and EU. The Government is committed to getting a deal by the end of 2020, however the EU Commissioner has cast doubt on whether that is achievable.

- 3.3 It may be a period of continued uncertainty around what the actual impacts of the UK's withdrawal will be, which is why the council will continue to monitor developments and plan activity to mitigate risks to the city and organisation and identify opportunities where possible.
- 3.4 During this period, the UK will remain in the customs union and the single market, meaning trade will carry on as normal. But the UK will be outside the political institutions – it will no longer be represented in the EU council of ministers or the European parliament.
- 3.5 Also during this period, the UK will continue to obey EU rules. EU citizens will continue to be able to travel to and work in the UK and British citizens can do the same in another member state.
- 3.6 The council Leader received a letter from MHCLG on 13th January 2020 confirming that MHCLG will continue to “co-ordinate and streamline communications and information from Whitehall to councils during the implementation period”. The Council will continue to escalate arising issues with MHCLG through the

County Contingency Planning - Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF)

- 3.7 On 24th December 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government wrote to all Chairs of Local Resilience Forums to inform them that no deal preparations for 31st January 2020 had been stood down with Operation Yellowhammer being halted.
- 3.8 Therefore Sussex Resilience Forum has stopped preparations for a no deal scenario. However, the forum continues to hold regular planning meetings related to wider emergency planning for the county and will remain live to Brexit developments.

Corporate Position

- 3.9 The Brexit Member Working Group continues to maintain political oversight of the council's planning activity and currently meets on a monthly basis.
- 3.10 The Brexit Resilience & Planning Group's officer membership is meeting on a monthly basis and continues to update situation reports (SitReps) for members and senior officers to ensure effective monitoring of Brexit impacts on council services and the city.
- 3.11 Meeting scheduling and reporting for both member and officer groups is continually kept under review depending on changes to national planning assumptions and member and senior officer requirements.
- 3.12 The Chief Executive remains the officer assigned by MHCLG as the Lead Brexit Officer for Brighton & Hove.
- 3.13 Scheduling of ELT and DMT engagement to assist with service preparedness in light of changed national planning assumptions and the halting of no-deal preparations is currently being developed. An updated checklist to help services

prepare for the potential changes ahead will be shared across the organisation and with partners where content is transferable.

- 3.14 Officers will continue to work with partners to understand the potential impact of changes caused by EU withdrawal. The City Management Board will remain a place for discussion and action around public sector preparations for the city with South East 7 providing a vehicle for monitoring regional impacts and activity. Officers will continue to work with the Food Partnership to address emergency planning around access to food and improving the city's longer term food resilience.
- 3.15 Planning for a no-deal scenario is still part of the council's preparations and business continuity plans will still consider potential impacts related to this with priority being given to vulnerable people, contracts and supply chains.

Brexit Budget

- 3.16 The council have received MHCLG funding to assist with preparations for the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This funding totals £314,984:

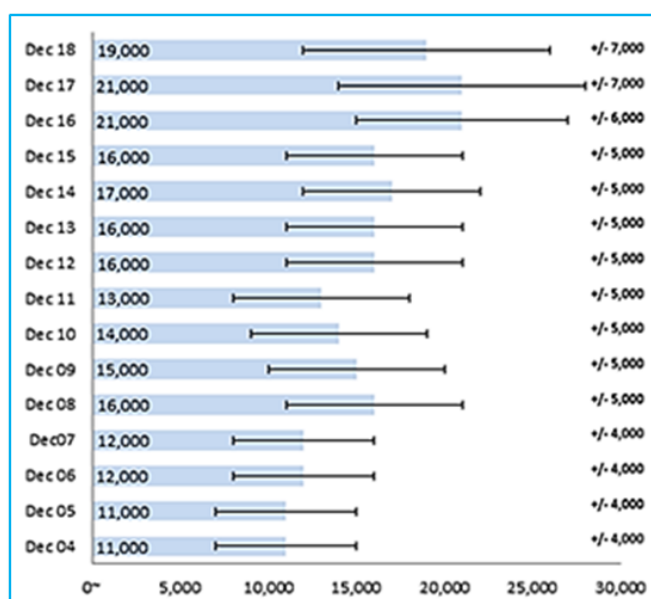
Spending priorities so far:

- Extended GOLD training = £10,250 for two Leadership Strategic Gold training sessions and one Working as a Liaison Officer session.
 - Brexit Coordinator (6 month secondment) = £22,000
 - Brexit Communications Officer (6 month secondment) = £22,000
 - 4 x ID document scanning devices = £700
 - Est. Remaining Funds: £260,000
- 3.17 The remaining funding and potential allocation is currently being developed through the Member Working Group and BRPG and specific figures will be provided through the next Brexit update report for the Policy & Resources committee.

Funding priorities in development are:

- Vulnerable EU nationals Support Fund – To cover costs of travel and ID to enable application to the EUSS
- Communication & Engagement activity with residents and businesses
- Sectoral research into potential impact of Brexit related changes on the city.

EU Nationals & EU Settlement Scheme



3.18 Figures from the ONS in December 2018 estimated that there were **19,000** residents in Brighton & Hove who were born in the EU. This figure is presented with **confident intervals** that could mean more or less actually live in the city but these are presently the best estimates BHCC has. It is important to note that some EU residents may have been granted citizenship in the past.

3.19 Latest EU Settlement Scheme figures released by the Home Office on 7th November 2019 show that **9,750** EU nationals in Brighton & Hove had applied to the scheme between 28th August 2018 - 30th September 2019.

3.20 Of that number **8,070** applications concluded with:

- **4,860** granted settled status
- **3,140** granted pre-settled status
- **70** given 'other' status
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- **1,680** were still 'in-process' at the time the data was recorded.

3.21 These figures are released quarterly and will continue to be monitored by the Brexit Coordinator.

3.22 In line with corporate priorities and the city identity the council is continuing to undertake activity to ensure local EU nationals are supported in applying to the EUSS. So far this activity has included:

ID Document Checking Service

- 3.23 The council is continuing to provide a free identity document checking service at Brighton Town Hall to help EU citizens begin their EU Settlement Scheme application and don't have access to an android phone or iPhone. This service is free and is available on a drop-in basis at the Register Office: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: (9.30-12pm) – Wednesday (10-12pm). Further details have been made available on the council's [Brexit webpage](#).
- 3.24 January 2020 figures show the service at Brighton Town Hall has so far **assisted 417** EU nationals in accessing the scheme.

EUSS Advice & Support for Vulnerable Migrants

- 3.25 [Migrant Help](#) is delivering outreach advice in Brighton & Hove for vulnerable EEA migrants who need help to register under the EUSS.
- 3.26 Drop-in sessions are running to help people who may find it hard to apply by themselves for settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) - specifically EU nationals or family members who are currently homeless, living in Roma & traveller communities, young adults who have left care, the elderly, victims of modern slavery, and people with disabilities, literacy or health issues.
- 3.27 Migrant Help adviser Charlotte Cheeseman delivers advice sessions at the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Hove on Fridays between 12.30-3.30pm on an appointments basis and offers advice at Voices in Exile's drop-in sessions on Tuesdays between 1.30-4.30pm.
- 3.28 Charlotte is Migrant Help's adviser for East Sussex & Surrey and is delivering outreach advice in Hastings, Eastbourne and elsewhere. Charlotte can be contacted directly if you have any questions about the drop-in sessions at charlotte.cheeseman@migranthehelpuk.org
- 3.29 Frontline council services and partners have been successfully signposting people to the Migrant Help advice service and monitoring of emerging issues is being done through the Strategic Migration Partnership and regular check-ins with the Brexit Coordinator.
- 3.30 In November 2019 Migrant Help reported that they are seeing an increase in more long term advocacy work with many people wanting to apply to the scheme without valid IDs (especially elderly and homeless) which has involved contacting embassies to get new documents.
- 3.31 Without a valid ID there is the option to progress with a paper form application using an alternative form of ID, though you must prove that you have tried and are unable to get a new ID from the consulate. These applications are taking around 6-7 months to process and conversely people in this no-ID situation often need to get their status sorted most urgently for benefits etc.
- 3.32 There is also the issue of funds for travel and new IDs. This is not included in Migrant Help's budget and so it has mostly been down to faith groups and friends to fund this which is difficult to organise and not sustainable.

- 3.33 BHCC are now scoping the provision of a fund to allow vulnerable EU migrants to apply for discretionary funding for identity documents and travel expenses. This funding would be provided through the initial MHCLG funding the council had received to assist with Brexit preparations.

Community Cohesion

- 3.34 A range of council officers and local police have been meeting regularly to develop community tension monitoring mechanisms, and ensure communication channels are in place for sharing of any information concerning community tensions and hate incidents related to Brexit. The group is also working to develop a joined up response for providing community reassurance.

Communications

- 3.35 In November 2019 the council appointed a Brexit Communications Officer, Ruth Allsop, to work alongside the Brexit Coordination Officer, Dee Humphreys, to ensure internal and external communication needs related to Brexit preparations were being met effectively.
- 3.36 The current focus for communications is raising awareness of the EUSS and the advice and support available in the city and nationally. An internal and external communications plan for the coming year is currently being developed by the Brexit Communications Officer.
- 3.37 In December 2019 the council published an [Open Letter](#) of Unity to the city from the council's three political leaders to address the impact the uncertainty surrounding Brexit was causing, particularly to EU nationals and to reassure the city that the council was doing all it can to prepare and maintain and further promote Brighton & Hove's reputation as an open and welcoming place.

Economic & Social Impact

- 3.38 The Brexit Member Working Group have asked for further work to be done to benchmark the city's current economic and social position so we can monitor and respond to changes through the transition period and into a new relationship with the EU including changes to the immigration system.
- 3.39 We can expect a variety of sectors to lobby Government during the transition period in the hopes of affecting the trade negotiations and new Government agenda. [Research](#) published in October 2019 by UKInbound outlines the potential negative impact immigration reforms will have on the tourism sector. The council will work with partners to understand in more depth the local situation and similarly relevant sectors for the city will continue to be monitored by officers.

Readiness Monitoring Report

- 3.40 An updated Readiness Monitoring Report will be shared with all members and published on the council website once all information is available. This report outlines the risks and issues being monitored by officers and any related activity undertaken. The last report was published in October 2019 and an update is thought necessary to ensure members and the public have a current view of city preparations before the 31st January exit date.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The council has been preparing for Brexit related impacts for a number of years through much national uncertainty and in that time has developed risk and issue monitoring and governance structures to ensure both political and senior officer oversight of its activities.
- 4.2 No alternative options are currently being considered however the current monitoring and reporting arrangements are kept under review depending on national planning assumptions and member and officer requirement.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation to date has been through city partners with regard to monitoring risks. The Brexit Coordinator has also been developing trusted lines of communication with partners to better understand potential impacts on the city and ensure issues that are arising from e.g. community groups are being escalated as necessary to the right local or national audience for response.
- 5.2 Further strategic engagement around understanding emerging issues for EU nationals in the city and the potential impacts of EU withdrawal on different sectors will be necessary to ensure the council can respond effectively to protect the interests of the city and council.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report summarises key issues for the council and city related to the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
- 6.2 Potential implications for the council and city are currently being monitored effectively but should be kept under review to ensure this remains the case and that we are responding as necessary in our planning during and after the transition period.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The cost of co-ordination and planning for Brexit will be met from the funds provided by national government. However, should further expenditure be needed in response to developments, Officers will use delegated powers, including urgency powers where necessary or seek authorisation from Members.

Finance Officer Consulted: Jill Fisher

Date: 15/01/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The proposals in the report comply with the Council's legal obligations under the law, including the Civil Contingencies Act.

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date: 15/01/20

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The council will continue to seek clarity around EU nationals' rights post EU exit on 31st January 2020, although it is anticipated that any changes that may be felt in the city will occur after the end of the transition period and the deadline of the EUSS has passed. Awareness raising of the EUSS and reaching the most vulnerable in the city remains a high priority for the council.
- 7.4 Linked to this are potential changes to the immigration system that will impact EU nationals' recourse to public funds. Developments are currently being monitored by the council's Revenue & Benefits Team and advice services.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 Sustainability impacts will be monitored during the transition period and proposed changes to regulations that emerge will be responded to as appropriate. Post-transition and longer term impacts will be considered where necessary in council's planning.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 See background information.

Any Other Significant Implications:

No other significant implications at this time.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.7 Planning around potential civil unrest related to Brexit has been a key part of partnership planning and will still be considered and developed as necessary through the City Management Board.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.8 The Risk Register contains Brexit as SR 35: **Unable to manage serious risks and opportunities resulting from the impact of Brexit on the local and regional society and economy.**
- 7.9 SR 35 is being monitored and updated through the BRPG. The Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law is the designated accountable officer.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 As well as the wider changes expected to emerge from the EU's withdrawal having public health implications, specific impacts on health and social care services will continue to be monitored. Specifically access to medication and workforce, which have received considerable public attention in the run up to possible no deal exit dates.
- 7.11 Potential changes to food safety regulations are another area that may have specific public health impacts and these will be monitored and considered in planning as necessary during and after the transition period.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.12 See background information.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None.

