

Preparations for Brexit

Summary

To update members on the potential impact to the Council should the UK should the leave the European Union on the 31st October 2019.

Portfolio - Leader

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 7 October 2019

Wards Affected

All

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) preparations that have been made to date be noted;
- (ii) £17,000 of the initial Government Grant be provided to and Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Hope Hub and Besom; and
- (iii) authority to use the “Brexit grant” be delegated to the Executive Head of Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Health in order to enable the Council to prepare for Brexit and assist local organisations with the potential impact on residents.

1. Resource Implications

- 1.1 The Government has given each District Council £52,452 in three instalments to deal with the impact of Brexit. £34,968 was received in the current year and £17,484 in the 18/19. This funding can be used not only for costs that the Council may incur but also to support local organisations as appropriate

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 It is the current Government’s stated intention to leave the European Union on the 31st October 2019, with or without a deal. Surrey Heath has been not only assessing the risks which could impact it internally but also working with other Surrey Councils on the wider risks to the community.
- 2.2 In terms of Surrey Heath, the Council’s principle risks fall in to a number of categories as follows:

Staff

The Council employs a number of staff who are from the European Union. Were these staff to leave, this may put some services at risk, at least for a short period. For the last 12 months HR has been working closely with these staff members to ensure that they have registered and hence are able to continue working after the Brexit. The Council also agreed at that time to pay any registration charges that would be incurred. Subsequently the Government removed the charge and HR have met and are continuing to meet with employees who are EU citizens to support them in their applications for the EU settlement scheme.

Meals at Home Supplies

The Council has many vulnerable residents who are dependent on receiving regular meals from the Council's Meals at Home service. This relies on a supply of food from the supplier to enable it to function reliably. The Council has been in discussions with the food supplier to ensure that it holds stocks in reserve to cope with any shortages. At the moment the supplier is holding several weeks' of food to cope with any supply delays as a result of Brexit. Consideration is to be given to the ordering of additional meals stocks in case of supply issues post Brexit, potentially as a result of fuel shortages impacting delivery, an increase of demand of the supplier, or increase to demand locally. However this is difficult due to storage constraints

Data Storage

At the moment data can travel freely between EU member states. If the UK leaves with no deal there may be restrictions in respect of the retrieval of data held outside the UK. The ICT department is working to ensure that the Council's data will remain accessible in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Fuel

There is a remote possibility of disruption to fuel supplies in the event of a no-deal Brexit, although this is considered to be low risk. The Council has an emergency tank at the depot which is normally used by refuse trucks, but in an emergency can be used by Council Vehicles. The Government has also put in place an emergency system for the supply of fuel only to those vehicles which can be identified as Council vehicles. Measures are being put in place to ensure that Meals at Home vehicles can access these supplies. Access to fuel for Community Transport vehicles is also seen as a secondary priority. Depleted supply would potentially limit the service function, with priority given to transporting residents to access medical appointments etc.

Refuse Collection

If the refuse collection service was interrupted, this could lead to a public health hazard. Joint Waste Solutions has been in discussions

with Amey to understand how the service would be impacted in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Insurance

Some insurance is underwritten overseas and hence there may be issues in respect of cover in the event of no-deal. The Council's insurance advisors, London Borough of Sutton, has advised it that Brexit will not impact any cover that the Council has in place

- 2.3 The Council's emergency planning advisors, Applied Resilience, have been representing the Council at the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Brexit planning, which supports the multiagency planning arrangements including managing the possible travel disruption from ports outside of Surrey and coordinating work to support financially vulnerable residents. The Council has also has a mutual aid agreement.
- 2.4 Nearer to 31st October, Surrey Heath will be expected to report into the LRF which in turn will be expected to report into MHCLG. The LRF also has multi agency emergency plans which the Councils can access if a response was required to deal with an emergency.
- 2.5 The LRF is just one route of the Brexit information and reporting. It runs alongside the local authority reporting, which comes straight from MHCLG and the South East representative Becky Shaw (East Sussex County Council).
- 2.6 The Council's emergency planning advisors, Applied Resilience, have been representing the Council at Local the Surrey Brexit Communications Group. The Council has also agreed to provide mutual aid to other Councils that may be impacted by Brexit.
- 2.7 It is not clear what the impact of Brexit will be on local residents. One of the possible impacts could be an increase in food prices and hence this is likely to put pressure on the more vulnerable members of the community. It is therefore proposed that some of the Government funding provided be given to those groups that are best able to support those persons. It is proposed that initially £17,000 of initial funding be provided immediately and divided between Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Hope Hub and Besom. Further funding may be provided later as it becomes more apparent were the needs are.
- 2.8 This paper only seeks to deal with the immediate impact of a no-deal Brexit. There are likely to be longer term implications, both good and bad, however these are unlikely to become clear until sometime in to the future.

3. Options

- 3.1 The Executive can accept, reject or amend the recommendation.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that
- (i) preparations that have been made to date be noted;
 - (ii) £17,000 of the initial Government Grant be provided to and Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Hope Hub and Besom; and
 - (iii) authority to use the “Brexit grant” be delegated to the Executive Head of Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Health in order to enable the Council to prepare for Brexit and assist local organisations with the potential impact on residents.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 None

6. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

- 6.1 Planning for Brexit supports both People and Place objectives.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 The Council can only make preparation for the potential impact on its own services. There may be other factors beyond the Council’s control which could impact services and the Council will work to try and mitigate these where possible.

Annexes	None
Background Papers	None
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