



Glasgow City Council
Brexit Preparation Forum

29 January 2020

Report by Chief Executive

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EU EXIT PREPARATIONS

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on the Council's planning activity in relation to EU Exit.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In a national referendum on 23 June 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU. On 29 March 2017, Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty was triggered, meaning the UK was due to leave the EU on 29 March 2019. There has since been three extensions to this date: the first, agreed in March 2019, extended Article 50 until 12 April 2019; the second, agreed in April 2019, extended Article 50 until 31 October 2019, and the most recent, agreed in September 2019, extended until 31 January 2020, which is the current deadline.
- 1.2 This report outlines the work being undertaken to prepare for the potential implications of an unprecedented and uncertain situation, particularly work to plan for a 'No Deal' EU Exit scenario.

2. Governance

- 2.1 The Council has established a governance structure to monitor and respond to the emerging situation and to oversee and progress preparations across the Council Family. This includes:
- Brexit Working Group - chaired by the Director for Regional Economic Growth and attended by senior officers from across the Council Family to share information and inform and progress planning activity;
 - Brexit Preparation Forum – chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by representatives of each political group and senior officers who provide updates on planning and preparations and emerging matters, and
 - Weekly briefings with the Chief Executive and regular updates to the Corporate Management Team.
- 2.2 The Council is also engaged in a number of external networks and is working closely with COSLA and other local, regional and national bodies to ensure that planning is suitably aligned and informed.

3. Planning and Preparations

- 3.1 The Council is ensuring that plans are in place to address situations that may arise, or circumstances that may be exacerbated by, EU Exit and the continuing uncertainty. Much of this work has focused on the immediate impact and response to a 'No Deal' scenario, as well as the longer term implications and recovery requirements.
- 3.2 Supporting EU nationals
- 3.2.1 An estimated 31,000 EU nationals are resident in Glasgow, the second highest number in Scotland. The [Home Office EU Settlement Scheme](#) (EUSS) enables EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK, and their family members, to apply for the UK immigration status they require to live, work and study in the UK as they

do now after 30 June 2021, or after 31 December 2020 in the event of a 'No Deal' exit.

3.2.2 As at 30 September 2019, approx. 15,500 (50%) of EU citizens resident in Glasgow had applied to the EUSS.

3.2.3 The Council continues to consider the potential impacts on Council workforce, citizens, and service users such as looked after children and vulnerable adults and is promoting the EUSS by:

- Publicising information on a dedicated [Brexit webpage](#) which signposts staff and citizens to a range of Scottish and UK Government materials and advice, including guidance on the EUSS;
- Continuing to use social media channels and staff briefings to further signpost, promote and encourage EUSS applications;
- Supporting EUSS applicants through the identification verification process, required as part of the overall application. Registrars operate an appointment system allowing applicants to scan required documentation. This does not constitute immigration advice, and
- Provision of the Assisted Digital service, funded by the Home Office and delivered by the digital/financial inclusion training agency 'We are Digital' (WAD) who have subcontracted a number of UK library services to deliver support to access and complete the online EUSS form. This service is offered at four Glasgow Libraries and allows EU citizens to book an appointed time with a library staff member who helps complete the online application form. It does not constitute immigration advice.

3.3 EU Funding

3.3.1 In the event of 'No Deal', the UK Government has committed to guarantee EU programme funding until 2023, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) 2014 to 2020. After the conclusion of this programme, the UK Government intends to operate a domestic replacement fund - the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). A public consultation on this is expected once the terms of EU withdrawal are confirmed. The Scottish Government has launched its own [consultation](#) on the potential replacement for the EU funding programme and Council officers will respond to this prior to the February 2020 deadline.

3.3.2 The Council is committed to engaging and shaping the UKSPF as far as possible to respond to the economic challenges in the city and wider City Region.

3.3.3 Analysis of EU funded programmes and funding streams has also been undertaken and continues to inform financial planning.

3.4 Food and Other Supplies

- 3.4.1 Intelligence indicates that supplies of food and fuel will be uninterrupted. However, Council services, including those engaged in the delivery of approx. 37,000 meals per day across nurseries, schools and care settings, have reviewed existing contingency plans intended to deal with any sudden shortages or disruption for example, the maximisation of local larder capacity and increasing production levels of the central production unit, CookFreeze, from four to six weeks.
- 3.4.2 The Council relies on external providers and suppliers to deliver services. Engagement is frequent and ongoing to seek assurance on the resilience of supply chains and the preparedness of providers and any additional contingency plans established. The Corporate Procurement Unit's engagement with supply chains has provided assurance on their resilience and distributors and suppliers have advised of measures including monitoring stock levels and increasing these, as required, and has advised that this activity can be scaled up, if needed. Engagement is also ongoing with Scotland Excel, the local authority shared service, who has undertaken a risk analysis across all frameworks.
- 3.4.3 The Council has not stock piled goods but has made provision for storage, if required. Should shortages arise, the Council will prioritise allocation to ensure continuity of critical services across the city.

3.5 Local Economy and Business Support

- 3.5.1 In October 2016, a report on [Brexit and the Glasgow Economy](#), prepared by Strathclyde University Fraser of Allander Institute was commissioned by the Glasgow City Region. This set out a number of asks of the Scottish and UK Governments to take specific policy decisions to support the city region.
- 3.5.2 In August 2019, the [Glasgow Partnership for Economic Growth](#) considered a further report on the potential economic impact of a No Deal Brexit and agreed that further work be undertaken to explore proposals for the Council's Economic Development service, Skills Development Scotland, the Department of Work and Pensions and Scottish Enterprise to proactively engage with the Scottish Government and also to consider a regional partnership approach to this activity.
- 3.5.3 As well as planning for any immediate impact on services, the Council is also planning for the 18 to 24 months post-Brexit and the longer term impacts that may arise. It is expected that the city's economy will be adversely affected in the event of a 'No Deal', with an impact on job retention / creation together with business growth and sustainability. Work is ongoing with other local authorities, COSLA and partner agencies to plan for economic recovery.
- 3.5.4 The Council is also signposting local businesses to a national self-assessment tool, created by Scottish Enterprise and Business Gateway, to assist in

preparing for EU Exit. The Scottish Government's Brexit Support Grant scheme, which provides businesses up to £4,000 to support preparations has also been promoted alongside ongoing access to a range of local business set up and growth products and support services.

3.6 Civil Contingencies and Business Continuity

- 3.6.1 As a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act, the Council has a responsibility for emergency planning and responding to sudden, serious incidents and ensuring care for people and continuity of critical services. This is delivered through established and tested arrangements which includes membership of the Scottish Resilience Partnership structure, specifically the Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Local Resilience Partnership (GEDLRP). A key element of the work of the GEDLRP has been consideration of the potential impact of EU Exit across partners, including NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Police Scotland.
- 3.6.2 The Local Authority Resilience Group (LARGs) co-ordinate twice weekly conference calls with representatives of all 32 Scottish Local Authorities to both consistently disseminate information and facilitate knowledge sharing amongst the partners.
- 3.6.3 The Scottish Government has published [Planning Assumptions](#) which present the reasonable worst case scenario in the event of a 'No Deal' EU Exit. These assumptions have been applied by the GEDLRP to inform planning, for example, in the event of fuel shortages (which are not anticipated), each partner would apply its own priority allocations and a national Fuel Management Plan would be activated.
- 3.6.4 Business continuity planning is a business as usual activity for the Council. In considering how the potential impacts of EU Exit could be mitigated, the Council Family has reviewed continuity arrangements with specific focus on EU Exit risk factors, for example, which critical functions rely on supplies of food and fuel.

3.7 Social Care

- 3.7.1 The UK and Scottish Governments have asked that suppliers maintain a six-week stock of key medicine items to mitigate any potential delays in the supply chain for acute and community care. The NHS message is not to stockpile. Exploration of alternative medicine products and different transport / delivery routes is also ongoing at a national level.
- 3.7.2 The Council will continue to support citizens and service users, within home and care environments. The Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (GHSCP) is engaging with key commissioning partners for assurance on their workforce planning measures and contingencies, noting the risk which may present to the Council to continue delivering services to vulnerable citizens. Discussions are continuing with the Scottish Government and COSLA,

including a social care event planned for February 2020 involving independent providers and local authorities.

- 3.7.3 Work is also ongoing between GHSCP and DRS to consider additional business support available to social care providers through Economic Development and Scottish Enterprise.

4. Wider Engagement and Activity

- 4.1 The Council continues to engage with a number of external agencies, including COSLA who is leading on a number of initiatives, including:
- Regular conference calls with Scottish local authorities to share information and experiences, and
 - Cost surveys to inform discussions with the Scottish Government about the potential additional cost pressures as a result of EU exit and the associated preparation.
- 4.2 In October 2019, the Scottish Government announced a £7m Rapid Poverty Mitigation Fund to support locally administered measures to assist those in financial crisis as a result of a 'No Deal' EU Exit. This is expected to be administered in the same way as existing welfare funds, however, confirmation has been sought as to whether this will be available in the event of a deal being agreed.
- 4.3 In February 2019, the Scottish Government provided £0.5m of funding to FareShare to support community food organisations to mitigate food inequality, including the purchase of additional food to supplement distribution of existing surplus supplies. This was followed by announcement of a further £1m in October 2019. Under the scheme, food will be distributed according to the same methodology as above and income maximisation support will also be signposted. The Council is engaging with the Scottish Government and partners across the city to maximise the impact of this work and align to existing work across the city.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 In line with national arrangements, formal meetings of the governance structure set out at section 2 were on hiatus in advance of the UK General Election on 12 December 2019.
- 5.2 Following the Election and the passing of the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill by the House of Commons on 9 January 2020, and with the UK due to leave the EU on 31 January 2020, it has been agreed that formal meetings will be held on an ad hoc basis, as required, until July 2020 when the progress of trade deal negotiations is expected to be clearer and the potential for a 'No Deal' EU Exit will be re-assessed.

5.3 In the meantime, planning activity and engagement will continue across all areas set out above.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.