

Brexit Committee

Thursday, 17th May, 2021

MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BREXIT COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson); and
Aldermen Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Baker, Brooks, Canavan, de Faoite,
Ferguson, Gormley, Kyle, Long, McLaughlin, McMullan,
Newton, Spratt and Walsh.
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. K. Walsh, Business Research and Development
Manager;
Mrs. C Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer;
and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were reported from Alderman Haire and Councillors Hanvey and Whyte.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th May.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

EU Settlement Scheme

The City Solicitor provided the Members with an update on the most recent statistics from the Home Office in relation to the EU Settlement Scheme.

He advised the Committee that the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) enabled EEA and Swiss citizens that lived in the UK, and their family members, to obtain the UK immigration status they would require to live, work and study in the UK after 30th June, 2021.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the statistics covering the period up to 31st December 2020 which had been released on 25th February 2021 and included a breakdown of the applications for Northern Ireland by local council. Some key facts were:

- As of 31st December 2020, just under 5 million (4,916,280) applications had been received, with 90% received in England, 5% in Scotland, 2% in Wales and 2% in Northern Ireland;
- 79,110 applications had been made in Northern Ireland and 15,640 of these had been made in Belfast;
- Northern Ireland had a noticeably higher proportion (18%) of applications from applicants under 18 compared to the rest of the UK (less than 15% for each other nation);
- In Belfast, the highest number of applications had been from Polish (4,380) and Romanian (2,740) nationals; and
- Of the applications submitted in Belfast, 91% had been concluded and of these 56% were awarded settled status and 41% pre settled status.

The City Solicitor reminded the Members that the application process would close on 30th June 2021 and that the Council were promoting any notifications around the process through its normal communication channels.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the discussion and presentation associated with the following 3 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Members of the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during the presentation and discussion on the following item as, due to its nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Update on Meeting with DEFRA

The Director of City Services provided the Members with an update from a meeting which she had attended with representatives from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on 6th May, 2021.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report and that a site visit to the Port Health Unit would be undertaken by the Members of the Brexit Committee.

**Update on AERA Investigation into
withdrawal of Port Staff**

The City Solicitor and the Director of City Services provided the Members of the Committee with an update on the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA) investigation into the withdrawal of port staff.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report.

Update on Legal Correspondence

The City Solicitor updated the Members of the Committee on recent legal correspondence.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the update.

Chairperson