

Brexit Committee

Thursday, 7th November, 2019

MEETING OF BREXIT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor de Faoite (Chairperson);
Aldermen Haire and Rodgers; and
Councillors D. Baker, Brooks, Canavan,
Flynn, Hanvey, Long, Magennis, McAteer,
McKeown, McLaughlin, Newton and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Ms. K. Walsh, Business, Research and Development
Manager;
Ms. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer;
and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Hutchinson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th and 24th October 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 November.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Schedule of Meetings 2020

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for 2020 and noted that dates for additional meetings would be presented to the Committee in due course:

- Thursday, 9th January;
- Thursday, 20th February;
- Thursday, 19th March;
- Thursday, 9th April;
- Thursday, 14th May;
- Thursday, 11th June;
- Thursday, 13th August;
- Thursday, 10th September;
- Thursday, 8th October;
- Thursday, 12th November; and
- Thursday, 3rd December.

The Committee also agreed that the meeting of 5th December, 2019 would commence at 4.30pm and the meeting of 17th December, 2019 would be cancelled.

Response from the Department for Communities

It was reported that correspondence had been received from the Department for Communities responding to questions which had been raised by the Committee at its meeting on 14th October, 2019.

The Committee agreed to review the response and submit any further questions for the Department of Communities at the next meeting.

Presentation

Prosperity UK

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. S. Singham and Mr. L. Karlsson representing Prosperity UK.

Mr, Singham presented an overview of the Alternative Arrangements Commission (AAC) which had been established by Prosperity UK to use the time after the first extension of Brexit to develop proposals for the deal. He advised that the Commission sought to develop credible and practical Alternative Arrangements relating to the Irish Border that could be delivered in a timely fashion to ensure that the UK retained full flexibility in its future negotiations with the European Union.

He outlined the AAC's recommendations for the Irish Border which included harnessing existing technologies and learning from Customs Best Practice. He pointed out that traders should be given the maximum possible choice of options.

He advised that the UK offer made use of widely used customs "simplifications" – procedures such as trusted trader schemes, Entry into Declarants Records and other customs simplifications. He stated that the AAC believed that it would be possible to develop a world class trusted trader programme.

He summarised the AAC's review of the NI protocol and what needed to happen next if the deal was completed. He suggested that a multi-tier trusted trader programme for large and medium size companies should be introduced, with exemptions for the smallest companies and that clarification was required under the Northern Ireland Protocol to ensure trade worked effectively.

He highlighted that further proposals on customs and regulation simplifications could be found on the AAC's website (available [here](#)).

Mr. Karlsson provided information from a technical perspective in relation to international best practice and trusted trader programmes, and advised there was a need to find ways to trade without extra cost via systems and capacity building which could be implemented quickly and efficiently. He suggested that lessons could be

learned from other countries on the development and implementation of joint border action plans.

Mr. Singham concluded by stating that the NI Protocol created export platforms that would not exist anywhere else in the world, therefore created opportunities for Northern Ireland to use. He advised that Northern Ireland could benefit from UK policies but the agricultural sector would be protected under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

During discussion, the representatives explained further the protection of the Peace Process, the need for co-operation between customs units to combat smuggling, the requirement of data sharing and analysis, the need for a capacity building fund, and the AAC's recommendation for a technical adjustment fund for small businesses.

They answered a range of questions in relation to customs checks, potential trade agreements, tariff agreements and export processes.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Issues raised in advance by Members

Before the second presentation on the published agenda, the following proposal to change the order of the agenda was raised:

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Baker,

That the Committee agree to consider item 4.) Commissioning of a Report on the agenda, before item 2. b) Presentation from Our Future Our Voice.

On a vote by show of hands seven Members voted for the amendment and seven against. As there was an equality of votes, the Chairman exercised his second and casting vote for the proposal and it was accordingly declared carried,

Commissioning of a Report (Councillor McLaughlin to raise)

Councillor McLaughlin outlined a proposal for an economic report to be commissioned.

The City Solicitor reminded Members that the Committee had no budgetary provision, therefore any decision to commission a report would have to be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

During discussion, Members raised concerns in relation to the cost of the research and the similarity to the motion which had been considered by Council on 4th November.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That a report be commissioned to examine the opportunities for cooperation in economic development supporting key growth structures and economic infrastructure that could be developed in an all Ireland context. This report should examine this having regard to relevant scenarios post Brexit or those that remain in play up to the date of withdrawal and also address the island of Ireland as a single economic unit.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

The Committee requests that a report be commissioned to examine the opportunities for co-operation in economic development supporting *good growth, inclusive growth and to outline an ambition to a just transition to a zero-carbon economy* and economic infrastructure that could be developed in an all Ireland context. This report should examine this having regard to relevant scenarios post Brexit or those that remain in play up to the date of withdrawal and also address the island of Ireland as a single economic unit.

On a vote by show of hands nine Members voted for the amendment and six against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

The Committee noted that the decision was subject to a budget being approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Presentation

Our Future Our Choice Northern Ireland

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Miss. D. Finn, Mr. P. Smith and Mr. A. Hughes representing Our Future Our Choice Northern Ireland.

Miss. Finn provided an overview of the campaign to represent the voices of Young People in Northern Ireland and highlighted that it was a cross community and non-party affiliated group. They summarised their work to date, which included working with a network of young activist, visiting Westminster and Brussels, and meeting with various ministers and EU officials to promote their message, together with media appearances.

The representatives explained their concerns in relation to Brexit and advised that they sought assurance for the future of young people of Northern Ireland. They suggested that it would not be undemocratic to have another vote on Brexit and everyone had a voice and deserved to be heard.

They highlighted that their campaign would be launching further plans for the general election next week.

During discussion, Members commended the representatives for their professionalism and dedication to highlighting the issues of young people from across Northern Ireland.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending and they retired from the meeting.

Noted.

Update on Day 1 Preparedness

The City Solicitor provided an update on the Civil Contingency Arrangements. He advised that due to the extension and general election reporting structures had now been stood down, but continued to be ready, if required.

He informed the Committee that a review of the Business Continuity Management process would be undertaken for the Council's critical services and would be updated as necessary, to prepare for the various scenarios.

Noted.

Chairperson