



Subject:	Update on Brexit Committee Activity
Date:	20 June 2019
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to outline for Members the role of the Brexit Committee, the work that it previously undertook and preparations that are ongoing in relation to the council's Day 1 preparedness.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note this update.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>

Members are reminded that the Brexit Committee held its first meeting in August 2018 and is responsible for researching, monitoring and reviewing the financial, resource or operational impact upon the Council and the district as a result of the UK's decision to leave the European Union. The Committee is responsible for making recommendations to Council on such issues (or to the relevant Standing Committee where appropriate).

The Committee's specific functions include:

- Articulating the Belfast specific issues to be considered as part of the negotiation and transition arrangements;
- The continuous monitoring of progress and announcements around Brexit;
- Influencing and contributing to regional considerations of the implications of Brexit on both the work of the Council and on the district;
- Identifying any actions the Council may take to mitigate any adverse impacts arising and capitalising on any opportunities as a result of Brexit;
- Reviewing changes to legislation arising out of Brexit and analysing the likely impact which they may have upon the delivery of council services;
- Fostering and maintaining positive relations and cultural links with the EU;
- Maintaining and promoting social cohesion within the district, post Brexit;
- Monitoring the impact on migrant workers, skills gaps and issues arising with regard to various sectors in the labour market;
- Financial and budget assumptions and implications for the district arising out of Brexit;
- Identifying the implications for EU grant funding and alternative funding opportunities;
- Seeking to influence decisions with regard to continuing access to and distribution of EU funds (including Peace, Culture and Interreg programmes);
- Ensuring the ability of Belfast to achieve the objectives, as set out within the Belfast Agenda;
- Ensuring the ability of Belfast to continue to attract and retain investment and grow the rate base;
- Ensuring the ability of Belfast to increase trade with existing and potential trade partners (access to supply chains / import and export issues); and
- Hearing evidence from other parties.

Activities to date

In the period from its establishment to the end of the last Council term, the Committee has considered a number of issues including:

- Potential impact of increased controls on the Port Health Unit (a site visit was undertaken to the Port).
- Technical notices issued by the UK government.
- EU Settlement Scheme.
- Considering possible scenarios for the Belfast services industry if Article 56 'freedom to provide services' of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU does not apply following the UK's departure from the European Union.
- Day 1 preparedness of the Council.
- Potential impacts of Brexit on a range of sectors across the City – this involved the holding of an external workshop to seek their views.
- Scenario planning around how the Council can input into the new structures which will be established as part of UK Withdrawal and Next Phase of Negotiations, which included input from Queens University Belfast.
- Potential implications of Brexit on ICC and Ulster Hall.

The Committee has also received presentations from:

- CBI (Confederation of British Industry) Northern Ireland - analysis on the work they have undertaken on NI migration
- InterTrade Ireland – on support available for business
- Invest NI – on support available for business
- BCC Youth Forum and other youth bodies
- Federation of Small Businesses - Making Northern Ireland an Enhanced Economic Zone

Visit to Brussels

A delegation, led by the Lord Mayor undertook a visit to Brussels in January 2019. The purpose of this visit was to engage with EU officials to represent the views of the council in relation to Special Designated Status, remaining in the single market and the Council's position on the Backstop; and to engage with EU Funding Bodies about our future participation in EU Funding Programmes.

The Committee also hosted a visit from the Seanad Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in March 2019.

Update on Brexit Day 1 preparedness

Members may be aware that that the previous Committee were updated at various meetings on the work that is ongoing in relation to identifying potential Day 1 service implications in

relation to Brexit. Members will be aware that there is ongoing uncertainty around the outcome and timings around the EU exit, therefore Officers are currently preparing for a 'no deal' scenario.

Members are advised that the following actions have being undertaken:

- 1) The Council's critical **services have completed Brexit Resilience Measures templates** to identify the potential impact that Brexit may have on service delivery over the period after exit from the EU and the necessary resilience measures that need to be taken before the exit date.
- 2) Responsible **officers have reviewed and updated their Business Continuity Plan** ensuring that it deals with service delivery post Brexit, and have communicated it to relevant staff.

Members are also advised that a process for internal situational reporting has been developed whereby **emergency planning** staff will provide situational reporting and daily position statements to the Council's senior management team and Members on critical services as appropriate. Officers are also working with relevant partners in relation to external situational reporting and the need to report on a daily basis into a central command hub. If this becomes necessary it will be added into the internal reporting process. Members are advised that this process went live w/c 25th March and reporting took place for several days. However due to the change of the EU exit date from 29th March and uncertainty around the timings of the exit, it was decided by the NICS that daily reporting was not required at this point and that the frequency of reporting would be kept under review as the situation evolves. Members should note that this period of reporting was a good test of the arrangements and officers are confident that the process works and can be activated as required.

EU Settlement Scheme

Members are advised that the previous Committee agreed that an information session on the EU Settlement Scheme be held in City Hall. Under the Government's EU Settlement Scheme, EU, EEA, Swiss citizens and their families must apply to get the immigration status they need in order to live and work in the UK after June 30th, 2021. It was also agreed that local organisations who successfully obtain funding from the Home Office funding scheme to allow them to support EU citizens to apply to the Scheme, be invited to provide the information at the session. Members are advised that several local organisations have been successful in receiving funding from this scheme and that council officers will work with them to hold an information session over the coming months as previously agreed.

	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications relating to this report but members should note that there is no budget associated with this Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>None</p>