



Subject:	Update on Brexit Day 1 preparedness
Date:	22 August 2019
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	The purpose of this report is to outline for Members work that is currently being undertaken in relation to the Council's Brexit Day 1 preparedness.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Members are asked to note this update.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>

Members are reminded that that the previous Committee had been provided with regular updates 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 exit from the EU, therefore Officers are currently preparing for the possibility of a 'no deal' scenario on 31<sup>st</sup> October and any disruption that may or may not occur in the period leading up to and after it.

Work previously undertaken

Members are advised that in the period prior to the potential exit on the 29<sup>th</sup> March the following actions were undertaken:

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

A process was also in place whereby **emergency planning** staff provided situational reporting and daily position statements to the Council's senior management team on critical services. A process for internal situational reporting was developed and critical services were asked to email the report to the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) each morning in order to allow Emergency Planning to collate the information and escalate any emerging issues. Collated information was then sent to the reporting points on a daily basis and where appropriate forwarded to Chief Officers, Heads of Services, Corporate Communications and Elected Members.

Members are advised that this process went live w/c 25<sup>th</sup> March and reporting took place for several days, however due to the change of the exit date from 29<sup>th</sup> 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 reporting arrangements and officers are confident that the process works and can be activated as required.

Planned activities

The Council's critical services are currently refreshing the Brexit Resilience Measures templates that they had previously completed to take account of the planned exit date of 31<sup>st</sup> October and to also consider normal 'winter pressures'. These templates will identify

the potential impact that Brexit may have on service delivery over the six week period after exit from the EU and the necessary resilience measures that need to be taken before the exit date to ensure that the Council continues to deliver key services. Officers are currently scheduling an internal officer workshop for mid to end of September specifically with the purpose of updating / refreshing the templates, and considering wider implications based on the most up to date information we have.

Members should also note that emergency planning staff are working with partners and arrangements exist across Northern Ireland to respond to emergencies and ensure that the support provided to the public is co-ordinated. In Belfast the agencies use the Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group to undertake planning to enable this response.

Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group members will be meeting before and after EU Exit to ensure all agencies can raise concerns if these arise. Normal emergency planning arrangements will be available to respond to emergencies if required. These are the same processes employed for any large unexpected event that may impact on the city and, as a result, are already tried and tested. This may be as a result of a civil contingencies issue such as severe weather or if there is an EU Exit related issue which leads to a significant threat or significant cumulative impacts arising, which necessitate a locally co-ordinated response. The Emergency Co-ordination Centre in City Hall will be on standby to activate if required. Refresher training for staff who may be asked to work in the centre was undertaken in the period up to the previous exit date in March. The Council will establish an internal information hub in the period prior to the exit date and will maintain shared situational awareness across all Council departments/functions. This will include any potential business continuity issues, concerns which need escalated to central government or rising tide issues which could lead to an emergency activation being required.

Work has also been ongoing in several areas around preparations for Brexit including liaising with central government departments and working on civil contingency planning with other relevant partners. Central government departments are developing plans to prevent and mitigate any potential impacts of EU Exit. The Executive Office is leading this work across the NI Civil Service and is establishing co-ordination arrangements to ensure that any potential issues can be identified and addressed as quickly as possible. These arrangements will be established prior to EU Exit and continue until required but will be scaled up/down as needed. Belfast City Council works with a wide range of departments to deliver normal services. The Council will link with the central government co-ordination arrangements to discuss and escalate any issues which arise in relation to EU Exit.

As Members are aware the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) have developed a risk register that consists of 16 main council level risks that need to be considered in light of Brexit. Each risk has an associated outline action plan for councils to consider in preparing for the risk. The risk register also deals with possible impacts post Day 1 and to the wider Council area and not just the organisation. Officers are currently working on updating the risk register and continue to participate in SOLACE's Brexit Task and Finish Group.

#### Food Safety and Port Health

Members are reminded that there are potential implications on food businesses and the Council's Food Safety and Port Health Regulatory functions. For example, Brexit may affect local food producers/exporters and importers. Consequently, the Council's Port Health Unit have been working closely with DEFRA, DAERA, the Food Standards Agency and local importers to develop and roll out a new UK IT system for the pre-notification of import of high risk food to replace the existing EU TRACES system which may no longer be available in the event of a no deal exit. We have also gathered and analysed data to estimate and prepare for additional checks that may be required for transited products (imported foods travelling through the EU destined for the UK)

In a no deal scenario every export consignment of animal origin destined for the EU may require certification to demonstrate it meets the necessary health requirements. Whilst this is primarily a DAERA responsibility, Council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) may certify fish and eggs. There are currently ongoing discussions between SOLACE and DAERA around the option of Councils undertaking this work and DAERA are considering how this work may be funded. We have been assisting DAERA by contacting businesses to establish their certification requirements and developing procedures to enable businesses to apply to Councils for certification where possible. We have been working closely with DAERA and the FSA to support the arrangement and delivery of workshops for potentially affected businesses. We have been taking the opportunity to signpost businesses to government advice and to support them to understand the potential changes and how to prepare for a no deal Brexit. Guidance for the food industry has been provided on the Council's website.

We are providing additional training for the Council's EHOs (both inland and at the Port) on the new IT systems and processes and to ensure we have sufficient trained officers to deliver the additional services required when the UK exits the EU.

	<p>Members are advised that Officers from Emergency Planning and Food Safety and Port Health Regulatory functions will be in attendance at this meeting to provide updates on the work that they are undertaking in relation to Brexit Day 1 Preparedness.</p>
	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications relating to this report but the work that is being undertaken to further define potential Day 1 impacts, risks and mitigations may have financial and resource implications and these will be reported to the relevant committees as required. It is likely that there will be direct costs associated with preparing for Brexit e.g. in relation to civil contingency planning and potential requirements for additional staff and where possible these will be claimed back from central government.</p> <p>Members should note that the Council has not included an increase in its recurrent budgets because of the uncertainty around Brexit, however, if one-off costs are to be incurred these will be financed through Council's general reserves.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>None</p>