

Brexit Services Review

Brexit Committee

14 January 2021



Belfast
City Council

Update – Review of Brexit Readiness Arrangements

- Officers continue to monitor the ongoing developments in relation to the implementation of the new arrangements and will update contingency arrangements as necessary
- An update will be brought to the February Committee meeting



Future Speakers

- Outstanding invitations that will be followed up:
 - Central government – DAERA, Dept of Health, Dept for Economy, DFI (Roads), Executive Office
 - PSNI
 - NI Water
 - BHSCT
 - Belfast Chamber of Commerce
- Members are asked for suggestions for other speakers they wish to invite to address Committee – these might include:
 - academics such as David Phinnemore/Katy Hayward
 - Invest NI/InterTrade Ireland



Update: Port Health

- Upgrade to Corry Place completed and discussions regarding new facility at Dargan Drive are ongoing
- New staff appointed and 24 hour operation in place
- Volumes through the port beginning to pick up
- Compliance approach (DAERA LEAD)
- Retail Checks (Trusted Trader Scheme)
- Support for Trade (Fish Importer Webinar 14th January)
- EU Inspectors
- Financial Impact & Charging



Council support for businesses: priority groups

- Wide range of support services available to businesses to help them address impact of UK exit from EU
- Council has a business support function through its Enterprise and Business Growth team – need to understand where team can have most impact in terms of businesses engaged
- 11,000+ VAT registered businesses in Belfast, 80% employ less than 10 people
- 1,800 of these businesses are exporters and around 1,200 are Invest NI client companies
- 600 exporters who would not be accessing client-managed support through Invest NI



Council support for businesses: priority groups

- Many of these smaller businesses work in service sectors which trade externally and are likely to be impacted by Brexit
- Priority groups for council support include:
 - The large number of smaller exporters that are not Invest NI customers (600)
 - Those that are trading services (for example there are 1,800 professional, scientific & technical businesses in Belfast, many of which will have external sales)
 - The large number of small traders that import or make purchases from outside of NI



Overview of “Be Brexit Ready” Events

- Council delivered two “Be Brexit Ready” Events in November and December 2020
- Aim: target those businesses who weren’t currently accessing Brexit-related support and support them to identify and overcome any challenges that the deal might present
- Content of events developed in conjunction with Invest NI, InterTrade Ireland, Trader Support Service (TSS) and NI Chamber of Commerce to ensure that these would complement other support available



Overview of “Be Brexit Ready” Events

- Two events attracted 64 businesses: one focused on service-related businesses and the other focused on goods businesses. Evaluation currently under way to inform future interventions
- Key issue arising is that Brexit and the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic have accentuated the importance of business resilience therefore any future support provision must focus on overcoming existing weaknesses and developing business strategy, markets resources and skills, in addition to the specific implications of the deal
- Outline of specific support to be presented to future meeting of the Committee

