

3 October 2019

Brighton & Hove City Council

Brexit Contingency Planning Briefing for Council

Report of Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law

Contact Officer

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In 2016 after the EU referendum the council formed an officer group to look at potential impacts on the city and council of the UK leaving the EU. Potential areas of impact were identified and high level analysis provided. The PPS team continued to monitor developments and teams across the council did the same, including Brexit considerations in some policy development e.g. Economic Strategy.

In 2018 a new officer group was formed, with membership from all directorates, called the Brexit Resilience & Planning Group to work together to monitor and mitigate potential impacts of Brexit on the city and council. It has been primarily focused on a 'no deal' scenario and ensuring we have considered potential outcomes in all our service planning. Business Continuity Plans for every directorate reflect possible impacts and Brexit is part of our Risk Register. Situation Reports (SitRep) are being completed by officers from across key areas in the council to ensure we maintain corporate oversight of emerging issues, activity and specific risks.

A [report](#) to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee in Dec 2018 outlines the council's approach to Brexit planning at that time and includes an [analysis](#) of potential impacts from different Brexit scenarios, including 'no deal'.

Current Activity – Aug/Sept 2019**Corporate Oversight**

The Policy, Partnerships & Scrutiny Team are maintaining a corporate coordinating role for all Brexit related activity happening within the organisation with links to city partners where necessary action is identified.

The Brexit Lead for the council is the Chief Executive – A role requested by the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government.

Strategic Risk

Brexit impacts have been identified as a specific risk on the Council's Risk Register (SR35) and also the city's. Oversight of the city risk is managed by the City Management Board (CMB). The Strategic Risk is currently being reviewed and updated by the BRPG.

Brexit is also a standing item at meetings of the Executive Leadership Team, maintaining strategic oversight of the planning for potential impacts, and also within individual Directorate Management Team meetings where established Business Continuity Plans are taking account of possible 'no deal' impacts.

Brexit Member Working Group

A cross-party member working group was established at the beginning of 2019 and maintains political oversight of the council's actions to mitigate the strategic risks to the council and city caused by the UK's Withdrawal from the EU and coordinates relations with city stakeholders and communities where potential impact has been identified.

The members of the group are listed below:

Member Name	Group Representing
Cllr Dan Yates (Chair)	Labour Party Group
Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty	Green Party Group
Cllr Lee Wares	Conservative Party Group

Brexit Resilience & Planning Group (BRPG)

The BRPG is the officer group responsible for identifying possible risks and impacts related to Brexit and provides information for corporate dissemination through completing a weekly Situation Report (SitRep) which is shared with the Leader, Member Working Group and senior officers and also highlights emerging capacity, funding and communications issues that may need ELT and/or political oversight.

The group has scheduled weekly meetings until November 2019 to ensure risks and issues are shared and solutions can be sought in a timely fashion and links in with the emergency planning work carried out by the Sussex Resilience Forum.

The Core Group membership and the potential impact areas are listed below:

Role / Responsible Area	Officer Name	Directorate
Chair	Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis	Strategy, Governance & Law
Corporate Coordination	Dee Humphreys	Strategy, Governance & Law
Legal	Sara Zadeh	Strategy, Governance & Law
Policy/Partnerships	Simon Newell	Strategy, Governance & Law
Communications	Clare Saul	Strategy, Governance & Law
Transport, Infrastructure, Air Quality & Shoreham Port	Mark Prior	Economy, Environment & Culture
Emergency Planning Impact (SRF)	Annie Sparks	Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing
Food Safety and Standards Consumer Rights	Jo Player	Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing
Community Impact	Emma McDermott	Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing
Economic Impact	Max Woodford	Economy, Environment & Culture
Workforce Impact	Ali McManamon	Finance & Resources
Health & Care Services Impact	Andrew Witham	Health & Adult Social Care

Public Health Impact	Alistair Hill	Health & Adult Social Care
Families, Children & Learning Impact	Mia Brown/ Carolyn Bristow	Families, Children & Learning
Financial Impact	Jill Fisher	Finance & Resources
Data	Heidi Judd	Orbis
Technology	Al Brown	Orbis

Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF)

BHCC is a member of the [Sussex Resilience Forum](#). The SRF is a multi-agency partnership whose members have statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, to work together to prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies and major incidents.

The SRF has completed its own Brexit Sussex wide risk assessment which is shared with the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government.

The SRF convenes weekly conference calls for a working group that allows for the sharing of information across the county. A Strategic Coordinating Group will begin regular meetings from the beginning of October and convene a tactical group when necessary. Risks and issues are regularly recorded in a Common Operating Picture report which will be shared with MHCLG.

BHCC also officers also attend planning workshops and table-top exercises to identify and mitigate potential risks at a regional and county level through the SRF. Recent training is being adapted for delivery to key stakeholders in Brighton & Hove.

Task & Finish Group – Supply Chains & Logistics

The SRF have allocated out work streams to Sussex local authorities and agencies. BHCC are responsible for looking at Supply Chains and Logistics in the event of ‘no deal’. This work stream is currently being developed and involves engagement and consultation with key stakeholders across Brighton & Hove and the county.

CMB & SE7

In April 2019 the [City Management Board](#) held a meeting focussed on planning for civil unrest in the city and has identified Brexit as a city wide risk in order to maintain a coherent response across city partners. Each member organisation’s current planning will be discussed at its next meeting in September 2019.

The Chief Executive is in regular contact with other regional Local Authorities through the SE7 group to highlight emerging issues and risks surrounding Brexit impacts on the city which are relayed to MHCLG through the lead officer, Becky Shaw, Chief Executive of East Sussex County Council.

Communications

External

At the beginning of 2019 the council started a social media push around Brexit to make sure EU residents, people visiting the EU and local businesses were being signposted to GOV.UK content. This was paused after a leave extension was agreed but the Communications Team have begun this push again.

A Brexit [resource page](#) is live on the BHCC site shaped around supporting residents and businesses to prepare and linking to GOV.UK guidance.

A communications officer with special responsibility is being recruited due to the size of the task of communicating prep, support and response to Brexit including media briefings.

Internal

The council has messaged the workforce around current preparation activity. Newsletters have included Brexit updates and this is continuing to be developed.

Due to the leave date currently remaining 31st October 2019 with no alternative being apparent and information around Freedom of Movement being released in the national media, it is thought necessary to ensure there is corporate messaging outlining support to staff and the way the organisation is planning. A message from the Chief Executive for reassurance purposes and to outline the corporate position is currently being drafted.

The Members and officers will be given a contact officer for Brexit enquiries once the Coordinating Officer is recruited by the end of Sept 2019. Officers will be encouraged to highlight what information they 'don't know' in order to ensure issues can be sensibly escalated and responded to in a timely fashion.

Sussex Warn & Inform Group (SWIG)

BHCC's Head of Communications is a member of the SWIG, which is the communications arm of the Sussex Resilience Forum and has adopted a tailored strategy to maintain coordinated communications across Sussex related to Brexit resilience and planning.

Communicating Preparations – Oct 2019

The BRPG is currently preparing an outline of the identified risks and local authority mitigation activity to date to share with Members and the public on the council's web page at the beginning of October 2019. This is informed by the BRPG SitRep and the SRF COP.

Immigration Advice

Background

In 2018 the [Migrant Needs Assessment](#) highlighted the lack of qualified immigration advice in the city which has also been highlighted as a risk within the context of Brexit.

Partnerships

BHCC's Community Safety Manager with responsibility for Refugees & Migrants chairs the Sussex & Surrey Strategic Migration Partnership which also brings Migrant Help to the table alongside Home Office officials so the advice situation has regional oversight and is under constant review. Similarly there is currently a virtual group including Brighton Housing Trust and Moneyworks monitoring demand levels for advice services in the city.

National Funding

The Government funding for specialised immigration advice was made available in 2018 (deadline now passed), but not to local authorities and local CVS organisations did not want to bid for funding due to the onerous process of bidding, the criteria attached to the payment of funding, ongoing performance monitoring from the Home Office balanced with the lack of evidence around local need for such a service.

EUSS Advice & Support – Sept 2019

Migrant Help is now delivering outreach advice in Brighton & Hove for vulnerable EEA migrants who need help to register under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Drop-in sessions are now running to help people who may find it hard to apply by themselves for settled or pre-settled status under the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) (EUSS) - specifically EU nationals or family members who are currently homeless, living in Roma & traveler communities, young adults who have left care, the elderly, victims of modern slavery, and people with disabilities, literacy or health issues.

Migrant Help adviser Charlotte Cheeseman is based at Voices in Exile's drop-in sessions on Tuesdays (1.30-4.30) and Fridays (11-2) to advise on what is needed to apply and make the applications directly. To apply, people will need to bring a valid ID (passport, national identity card or biometric card), plus evidence of UK residency (NI number or dated documents like bills, doctors letters, council tax).

Charlotte is Migrant Help's adviser for East Sussex & Surrey and will be delivering outreach advice in Hastings, Eastbourne and elsewhere as well as from other venues in Brighton as yet to be confirmed.

Please contact Charlotte directly if you have any questions about the drop-in sessions at charlotte.cheeseman@migranthelpuk.org

BHCC EUSS Scanning Support – Sept 2019

The council is currently preparing to run a biometric document scanning service through the Register Office at Brighton Town Hall to assist residents to apply to the EUSS scheme who currently don't

have access to an android phone. Those in need of support with their applications will be signposted to Migrant Help.

Targeted communications will be prepared for residents where possible and health and care providers will be notified of its availability as soon as it is operational.

Funding

BHCC had received £210,000 from the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government Half received 2019/20, other half to be received 2020/21) with an additional £104,984 announced by the Secretary of State in August 2019. The Secretary of State has said this funding “...is expected to support a range of activity including communications, training and the recruitment of staff.” The current funding priorities for the council are outlined below and new requests are identified through the BRPG with

The Sussex Resilience Forum had received £76,000 at the beginning of 2019 with an additional £158,200 being allocated by Government in August 2019. The SRF will prioritise funding needs with input from all members including BHCC.

Brexit Response & Recovery Fund

As we are planning for a ‘no deal’ scenario it is thought best practice to establish a fund, from a portion of the Government funding with a fast & efficient protocol for accessing that will enable the council to respond to events post the 31st October leave date. To ensure the council can act quickly, delegated spending power should be assigned to the BHCC Brexit Lead.

The BRPG will identify the areas they think could require additional resource after the leave date which will be shared with ELT and the MWG.

Current Funding Priorities – Aug/Sept 2019

Funding Priority	Criteria	
Brexit Coordinator Role	Background Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the current volume of work related to Brexit which will potentially increase nearing the exit date and after, including monitoring risk and coordination of communications, resource considerations and emergency planning across the organisation and city it is thought best practice to have a dedicated role for coordination of Brexit related activity. The current lack of corporate capacity to deliver this effectively means it has been set as a high priority.
EUSS Assistance Service	Background Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with national best practice and the city’s identity EUSS service being trailed in Register Office. Need to target availability to vulnerable residents and staff

Resilience & Risk Management Training	Background Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brexit brings the need to be prepared, being responsive and implementing contingency planning, managing risk and being resilient. Also working closely with our partners. Training needs to be included in our BREXIT preparations, and planning and this is an opportunity to train BHCC staff at a high level and ensure we have cover and resilience across a number of services.
Fish Export Licence Officer	Background Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the local authority area Brighton & Newhaven Fish Sales (B&NFS) exports wet fish landed at Shoreham Port Under the current arrangements for a no-deal Brexit physical examination of fish and production of a EHC for export will be required six days a week. • Under the current arrangements for a no-deal BREXIT physical examination of fish and production of an EHC for export will be required six days a week.
Brexit Communications Officer	Background Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the administration, ELT, Brexit Lead, Brexit Co-ordinator, and Brexit stakeholder groups, by providing communications and public relations advice to help Brexit planning. • Develop and co-ordinate with lead members and senior officers key corporate messages, and ensure consistency across external and internal channels. • Communicate information targeted towards residents, businesses, Members, media, staff, partners and other city stakeholders on the impacts of Brexit in Brighton & Hove. • Organise engagement activities at specific groups, for example Member briefings, media briefings, and staff briefings on Brexit. • Maintain external and internal digital resource libraries to provide advice and guidance on Brexit. • Respond to public queries received through social media, media queries received through our News desk, and hold Q&A sessions with staff. • Commission graphic design, audio, filming, and paid for advertising to effectively communicate news and information. • Assist on other relevant change communications, and work as part of a wider Communications Team.

