

Report to Strategic Leadership Team

Item number:

Contains confidential or exempt information	None
Subject of report	Brexit Preparedness
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For consideration by	Strategic Leadership Team
Date to be considered	24 April 2019

Keywords/Index	No Deal - Brexit Preparedness
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Reason for report
To give an update to Strategic Leadership Team on Ealing's preparations for No Deal Brexit.

1. Recommendations

- i. Strategic Leadership Team to note the actions undertaken by the Brexit Preparedness Group to prepare Ealing for Brexit.
- ii. Strategic Leadership Team to review the action plan and progress against actions listed therein.

2. Reason for recommendation and options considered

At the time of writing this update the UK's exit from the EU remains unspecified. On the 10th of April the UK and the EU27 agreed to a flexible extension of the Article 50 period for six months to 31 October 2019. The exact date remains unknown as if the withdrawal agreement is passed by Parliament the UK could leave the EU at a sooner date. The regional reporting and monitoring arrangements have been stood down and the focus for boroughs is now on preparation for the EU elections.

This report provides an update on the continuing work undertaken by Ealing Services in preparations for Brexit including preparations for a no deal Brexit. This work is listed in the attached Brexit Action plan (Appendix 1) summarising the activities that services are implementing to ensure that they are prepared for foreseeable impacts of no deal Brexit.

3. Key implications

At the time of writing this update for Strategic Leadership Team on the 18th of April. The following events have occurred.

- 28th of March – Date for Brexit has been put back to the 31st of October.
- Councils have begun preparing for the EU elections due to take place on the 23rd of May 2019.

What next?

The UK could still leave the EU earlier than the 31st of October if a withdrawal agreement is ratified by MPs. The country must now take part in European elections on 23 May - if it did not the UK would have to leave the EU on 1 June without a deal.

Ealing's Brexit Preparations

Ealing Council will continue to prepare for a no-deal Brexit until clarity around the mechanism of UK's departure from the EU is provided. To plan for Brexit the Brexit Preparedness Group has been established but is now meeting monthly to ensure that the councils preparations for Brexit are maintained. This meeting tempo will be reviewed should Brexit date be brought forward. Part of the work undertaken by this group was to produce an action plan which is attached at appendix 1.

Action Plan (Appendix 1)

All actions listed in the action plan remain on track with much of the work ongoing. One new action has been identified to assess the councils exposure to Data transfer, handling and updating documentation.

Actions Update

Brexit Communications – Amongst other messaging Comms have updated website with links to the latest Brexit advice for business and residents. A news item on Brexit was carried in the council's business e-newsletter which goes to approximately 10,000 Ealing businesses. The council's communications team has also liaised with colleagues at London Councils regarding regional communication activity and planning for co-ordinated regional messaging. Messaging has been sent to all Ealing EU staff who are known to the council and a press release on the cabinet paper has been issued.

Settlement Scheme scanning service – The settlement scheme scanning service run by registrars has gone live from the 5th of April. This service helps EU citizens with the identification verification process. For pre-booked weekday appointments they are charging £15 and £25 for a Saturday or a weekday drop-in appointment.

Brexit Risk Register – The Brexit Preparedness Group has created a Brexit specific risk register with 38 Brexit risks. Risks have now been allocated to services to score and mitigate for. The risk register looks at risks associated with a no-deal or deal scenario.

Brexit reporting - Brexit SPOC has continued to support the regional reporting arrangements and the submitted data for monthly and weekly reporting. The monthly EU monitoring assessment report is attached at Appendix 2.

Emerging Issues – since the last update to SLT

The following emerging issues have been identified or updated since the last SLT update and will require further monitoring:

1. Following the agreement between the EU and UK government for an extension to Article 50 to the 31st October 2019 the Central Government response to EU Exit has been stood down. This has been confirmed on a teleconference with LRFs this on the 11th of April. Whilst there is a possibility of a no-deal exit on the 31st of May if the UK does not partake in the EU elections this is not the legal default position and therefore the current planning

guideline is that the withdrawal date is the 31st October unless there is a change to the current situation in relation to the elections.

2. The council has begun preparations to take part in the European Elections on 23rd May.

4. Financial

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. All councils have been allocated £220k over a two-year period to help with preparing for Brexit.

The council has not yet committed resources beyond modest investment (under £1K) in equipment to provide the assisted digital service. However, the following framework and approach is proposed to ensure that the council is able to maximise the use of this resource.

1. Tap into additional funds where available eg the FSA
2. Record activity to support one off/new burdens bids to Govt
3. Prioritised use of the £210K we have been allocated as follows:
 - o Priority activity once channels above exhausted
 - o Political priority/direction

Request for from Comms for £849.00 for an A5 leaflet to all EU citizens has been agreed.

5. Legal

None at present.

6. Value for money

None.

7. Risk management

No – Deal Brexit continues to pose significant risk to services. A Brexit specific risk register is under development.

8. Community safety

None

9. Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough

The Residents' Survey addresses issues under all three key priorities.

10. Equalities and community cohesion

N/A

11. Staffing/workforce and accommodation implications:

N/A

12. Property and assets

N/A

13. Any other implications:

N/A

14. Consultation

N/A

15. Timetable for implementation

N/A

16. Appendices

- Brexit Preparedness Action Plan V2 (**Appendix 1**)
- Amey Brexit Briefing Paper (**Appendix 2**)

17. Background Information

N/A