

SOUTHWARK BREXIT PANEL

MINUTES of the Southwark Brexit Panel held on Wednesday 19 September 2018 at 9.30 am at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Victoria Mills (Chair)
Councillor James Coldwell
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor David Noakes
Councillor Kieron Williams

OFFICER SUPPORT: Aine Gallagher, Principal Policy and Public Affairs Officer
Harjeet Sahota, Policy and Public Affairs Officer
Everton Roberts, Principal Constitutional Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Kieron Williams.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

3. MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes was deferred.

The Brexit Panel invited expert witnesses to discuss and give evidence on the potential impact of Brexit on higher education and healthcare.

4. EVIDENCE SESSION - THEME: EDUCATION

The panel heard evidence from Professor Patrick Bailey – Deputy Vice Chancellor, London South Bank University

Below is a summary of the issues discussed in the evidence sessions:

Education

- Professor Bailey raised significant concerns that LSBU has around the impact of Brexit on EU students in higher education, in terms of attracting new students and uncertainty for existing students who are unsure about their future.
- Students and staff in the EU felt unwelcome after the referendum vote , the university needed to provide emotional support to offset this indirect impact.
- There are concerns that Brexit will make it more difficult to attract and retain staff, as well as concerns of EU funding, which funds research that is crucial for universities. Universities are concerned that it will be harder to take part in international research bids if the UK is not part of the EU. This is particularly difficult for universities which are already facing financial challenges.
- Concerns were also raised about the direct and indirect consequences on student fees, and the potential impact of an economic downturn following Brexit which would negatively affect local businesses and therefore workforce and employment opportunities.
- Universities in the UK value the richness of diversity from the EU, including staff and students, as well as programmes such as Erasmus, and are concerned about losing that.
- UK and EU students are currently recorded in the same way and no distinction is made between the two, therefore universities are unlikely to have accurate figures on how many EU students they have.
- All of the work that LSBU has done has been around mitigated the negative impacts of Brexit; they do not see any positive opportunities.

5. EVIDENCE SESSION - THEME: HEALTHCARE

The panel received evidence from the following individuals:

Caroline Gilmartin – Director of Integrated Commissioning, NHS Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Ross Graves – Managing Director, NHS Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group
Professor Kevin Fenton, Strategic Director of Place and Wellbeing
Mark Dayan – Policy and Public Affairs Analyst Nuffield Trust

The Panel also received written evidence from Dr Matthew Patrick, CEO South London and Maudsley (SLAM) NHS Foundation Trust

Below is a summary of the issues discussed in the evidence sessions:

Health

- A wide range of concerns were raised about the potential impact of Brexit on health services, including the NHS, public health and social care.
- Health services are a key consideration for Southwark and Brexit, as the borough has world class health institutions. Expert witnesses highlighted that it was impossible to know the full extent of the impact of Brexit on those services.
- For the NHS, emergency preparedness is a priority along with resilience. Health professionals raised concerns that there is not enough time for the NHS to properly plan, which could have an impact on patient safety particularly in the case of a no deal Brexit.
- Particular concerns were raised about the prospect of the UK leaving the EU with no deal, which could have significant consequences for the supply of medicines and regulation.
- The UK health service has a significant proportion of EU workforce, particularly in London, which has led to concerns about vacancies being unfilled, especially in the social care sector. Attracting more people into social care would require improved pay and working conditions, which seems unlikely in the context of the current financial constraints on local authority budgets.
- The emotional impact of Brexit on health staff was significant and the NHS ran a campaign about the importance of EU staff to help mitigate that impact.
- Health professionals emphasised that the impact of Brexit on health in the UK must be seen in the context of austerity, and an already strained NHS service dealing with more complex conditions and an ageing population.
- The UK currently benefits from professional networks and collaborative EU organisations for their research, information sharing and expertise. There is a risk that public health legislation in the UK will fail to keep up with EU legislation following Brexit.
- A potential indirect consequence of Brexit if there is an economic downturn would be an increase in economic inequalities which lead to health inequalities, which would drive up demand on services. Reciprocal healthcare for UK citizens living in the EU in the event of a 'no deal Brexit' is also unclear.
- Witnesses emphasised the need for health to be prioritised in the EU negotiations to protect those who are most vulnerable in society, but warned that it will not be possible to mitigate effectively against the impacts of Brexit with ongoing cuts to local government and public health grants.

6. SCOPE OF NEXT MEETING

The chair outlined the proposed scope of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.45am.

CHAIR:

DATED: