

Southwark Brexit Panel recommendations - update

Appendix 1

No.	Southwark Brexit Panel recommendation	Cabinet response	Update on progress
1	Publish the Council's Brexit contingency planning, financial planning and risk register in January 2019 with a further update in February 2019 and again in March 2019. This should include making sure contractors also have continuity plans in place and that the council is working closely with the GLA and other London Boroughs to ensure we have robust emergency planning in place especially in the event of no deal.	Agreed.	A Brexit risk register was published and has been updated monthly. Southwark's primary responsibility is continuing to provide local services and minimising the impact of disruption on services to residents, businesses and the borough as a whole. The council regularly reviews its emergency planning and business continuity arrangements, and such review takes account of possible Brexit impact. Regular progress reports have been presented to Cabinet since January, the latest of which was a report to Cabinet on 18 June 2019. The borough's emergency plan was presented to Cabinet on 16 July 2019.
2	Continue to develop our understanding of the impact of Brexit on the council, our workforce, our services, our partners and our residents, and the council's role in helping them to prepare for Brexit.	Agreed.	The council continues to develop its understanding of the impact of Brexit on all these groups, with further such details provided through published progress reports to Cabinet. For example, the Library Service is participating in the EU Settlement Scheme supporting EU citizens who have to complete residency forms. This is being done by providing free to access to computers and WiFi and where needed assisting people the process of completing the forms. Also, the Southwark Business Forum recently discussed economic wellbeing and sustainability (pre and post Brexit) at their meeting in June 2019.
3	Identify and assess the risks to public order associated with a no-deal Brexit and develop contingency plans accordingly to respond to and mitigate against those risks.	Agreed.	See 1. A Brexit risk register was published and has been updated monthly. More specifically, NHS partners, commissioners and service providers are assured that work is taking place to address any business continuity risks including risks to the supply chain. Regular progress reports have been presented to Cabinet since January, the latest of which was a report to Cabinet on 18 June 2019.

4	Publish and review the work already undertaken about the potential impact on Southwark Council's workforce.	Agreed.	<p>The Council values the contribution and commitment of its EU workforce in providing quality services for all borough residents. The Council's preparations for Brexit were reported at the Brexit Panel meeting on 3 October 2018 and key actions were captured in the minutes of the meeting. A series of drop in and advice sessions on preparing for EU exit, in particular with regards the EU settlement scheme, has taken place for staff across office and depot sites. More than 60 employees have been supported to complete their settled status applications by our teams so far with more events planned for later in the summer and autumn. The Home Office have praised the work of the Council as a responsible and supportive employer in piloting and publicising the EU Settlement Scheme</p>
5	Cover the cost of applying for settled status for Southwark Council employees.	Agreed.	<p>Not applicable following the decision by government to remove the cost of application.</p> <p>Southwark was a pilot site (up to end of March 2019) regards the EU settlement scheme. Following this the scheme was rolled out nationally. The document scanning service is now available in 24 London Boroughs, although Southwark continues to be the lead local authority nationally. To date (21 January to 12 July), a total of 1,880 customers have utilised the ID verification service in Southwark of which 24% are Southwark residents. The number of individuals making appointments in Southwark accounts for approximately 19% of the total number across England, Wales and Scotland.</p> <p>Southwark officers have been asked to attend a Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government meeting at the end of July/early August which will focus on the cost of EU settlement to local authorities</p>

6	Request information from contractors on their workforce impact assessments.	Agreed.	The Council made contact with contractors ahead of the original planned withdrawal date of the UK from the EU of 31 March 2019. This included assessing workforce impact. Conversations and work continues between the Council and contractors on contingency planning, risk management and ongoing impact of EU Exit on service delivery where relevant. We have been assured that the NHS and CCG have contingency plans regarding workforce
7	The Council should cover the cost of applying for settled status for all children in its care.	Agreed; also a statutory requirement.	Not applicable following the decision by government to remove the cost of application. The council takes its duty of care responsibilities seriously and officers continue to work to ensure no one group or individuals is disproportionately impacted. Specific information has been issued by government with regards supporting looked after children and care leavers who are required to apply for EU settled status. Our specialist teams across social care have taken and continue to take account of the additional information and support accordingly.
8	Southwark Council should create a one-off fund that will make grants to voluntary and community groups to support vulnerable people through Brexit. This would ensure difficult to reach groups are supported to apply for settled status and any other difficulties emerging for EU citizens as a result of Brexit.	<p>Agreed; to be informed by the outcomes of work from (9) and (10) below.</p> <p>In order to support residents and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark is one of only two London Boroughs piloting a 	<p>The Policy and Resources Strategy 2019-20 report to cabinet on 5 February 2019, subsequently agreed by Council Assembly on 27 February 2019, set aside a sum of £2m from the London Devolution Reserve to act as a special risk reserve to protect the council against the negative effects of Brexit. A further £300,000 commitment was added to the base budget from 2019-20 to cover any operational cost pressures arising from the outcome of the Brexit negotiation on Southwark. These funds will be prioritised to support the recommendations made by the Southwark Brexit Panel.</p> <p>Alongside the Local Government Finance Settlement 2019-20, the Government announced that local authorities across England would receive grant funding to support their</p>

		<p>document scanning service*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local libraries will be providing an Assisted Digital Service. 	<p>preparations for Brexit. Southwark's allocation will be £0.210m (£0.105m in 2018-19 and 2019-20).</p> <p>Officers recently met with senior representatives from Community Southwark to discuss what further work may be required in supporting harder to reach groups and individuals who may be disproportionately affected as a result of Brexit impact. Given the flexible extension on EU Exit to 31 October, the extent of impact may not be fully known until (and more likely) beyond that date.</p> <p>* The document scanning service is now available (July 2019) in 24 London Boroughs, although Southwark continues to be the lead local authority nationally.</p>
9	Collate information and resources being provided by other organisations about support for EU citizens, the settled status application process and other relevant information, and signpost to voluntary and community sector organisations offering support.	Officers to undertake necessary work and report back on progress.	See 2, 5 & 8 above. The council remains committed to providing additional local support where required to mitigate specific local impact of Brexit on Southwark's communities.
10	Identify vulnerable individuals and groups who may struggle with the settled status application process or be unaware of what they need to do, including older people (including in care homes or supported housing) and some people with disabilities, and work with voluntary and community groups to ensure those people are communicated with effectively.	Officers to undertake necessary work and report back on progress.	See 2, 5 & 8 above. The council remains committed to providing additional local support where required to mitigate specific local impact of Brexit on Southwark's communities. The Council continues to consider together with relevant partners possible ways to better understand any potential impact of Brexit on population health and wellbeing. This impact may include issues of employability. For example, the new Southwark Works contracts will go live in July 2019 focusing on supporting residents back into employment and in work progression into better employment.
11	Request clear guidance from central government about process for EU citizens during the transition period and in the event of no-deal.	Agreed.	Since January 2019 at a strategic level within the council the Chief Officer team has continued to meet. Chaired by the Chief Executive, the team consider local EU Exit

			<p>impacts and actions and ensure the necessary response and resources are deployed. This has also included making representations through regional and national arrangements for clear guidance from government for Southwark's EU citizens.</p> <p>On 12 April the government confirmed they had suspended no deal planning and with it the regional and national arrangements that were in place between local government and MHCLG. The London Resilience Forum (LRF) has subsequently suspended its strategic co-ordination group involving local councils, the 'blue light' services, NHS, GLA and pan London stakeholders. As with local arrangements, LRF will keep this under review in the light of the changing national context.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is likely to step up the frequency of meetings at a strategic level following the outcome of the Conservative leadership process on 22 July, the establishment of a new Prime Minister and updating of 'no deal' planning by government in anticipation of the 31 October withdrawal date. Officers will continue to request clear guidance where this impacts on Southwark residents from the EU.</p>
12	Engage with partners and local businesses to encourage them to support their EU workers to apply for settled status – this could be through schools and health partners but also working through the Southwark Business Forum.	Agreed.	See 5 above. The Southwark Business Forum has met quarterly over the last 3 years and the Council continues to engage proactively with the business community in preparing and planning for EU Exit. Ongoing work is underway with other business networks including BIDs, Chamber and Federation of Small Businesses. The single biggest issue for business remains uncertainty at a national level with regards if and when the UK will leave the EU and on what terms. This has made local planning and preparedness a significant challenge.

13	<p>Prepare a comprehensive communications plan looking at all avenues we have to engage with residents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information through direct mailings, council website, council publications, social media etc.; • Signposting to support and information available; • Clearly communicate the message that the council wants EU citizens living in Southwark to stay in the borough; • Identify organisations and partners who could communicate with residents about settled status process (e.g. NHS, GP surgeries, Job Centres) and encourage them to make information available. 	Agreed.	<p>Cabinet agreed that a comprehensive communications plan be developed looking at all avenues we have to engage with residents. There is a specific focus on ensuring our EU residents and staff know they are welcome in Southwark, and detailing the support available to them with regards to the EU settlement scheme. The council continues to communicate regularly with residents, staff and businesses about the UK's exit from the EU, through the media, social media, our newsletters, intranet and Southwark Life magazine. An area dedicated to Brexit is on the council's website (www.southwark.gov.uk/brexit).</p>
14	<p>Review the information available on the council website for businesses (including new businesses starting up in the borough) to make it as easy as possible for businesses to understand their obligations and changes to regulations etc. This is important and helpful whether there are changes following Brexit or not.</p>	Agreed.	<p>The Southwark Business Forum has met quarterly over the last 3 years and the Council continues to engage proactively with the business community in preparing and planning for EU Exit. The council will be represented on Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government task and finish groups on the costs associated with supporting businesses locally. The task and finish group is likely to be set up in the coming weeks.</p> <p>An area dedicated to Brexit including on what business should consider to prepare for EU Exit is on the council's website. These pages have been regularly reviewed, including in May 2019 following agreement to provide a flexible extension to article 50.</p>

15	Note the potential impact of Brexit on the local economy and job market, particularly in key sectors identified in the Brexit Panel evidence sessions – construction, hospitality, social care, and digital and creative. Consider how this could be linked-in to the current work being done on Labour Market Intelligence and vacancies by the Council.	Noted.	See 12, 14 and 16. In spring 2019 the council with partners undertook a review of the Economic wellbeing strategy and delivery plan with a range of key stakeholder including a workshop with local employer held in May 2019. A gap and futureproofing analysis of Economic Wellbeing Strategy will be undertaken in summer 2019.
16	Look to fast track work streams in the Council's Skills Strategy to help support local residents to be upskilled and fill potential gaps in the hospitality, health and social care and construction workforces.	Agreed as part of skills strategy delivery plan.	The Council and partners have updated the borough skills strategy and delivery plan including workstreams to focus on labour market intelligence in the key sectors identified. Skills Strategy delivery plan focuses on skills offer for key growth sectors – health, hospitality and digital. For example there is active and ongoing discussions with Kings, Guys and St Thomas' and other providers on skills provision in health with an action plan in development. A report on the skills strategy and plan was presented to Cabinet on 18 June 2019.
17	The Council should publish a Tourism Strategy and Action Plan by autumn 2019 to ensure a sector that could remain strong during Brexit contributes to the local economy and job creation. This does not need to be limited to the direct link with Brexit but rather be a wider piece of work that seeks to promote the strong cultural offer in Southwark and whilst balancing the potential pressures tourism can place on our residential communities.	In taking this forward and given the importance of a pan-London response on tourism, work with relevant organisations such as London First in response.	<p>In May, London First published analysis on income generated to the London economy from international tourists on a borough by borough basis. The report entitled "mapping the local value of international visitors" identified that international visitors contributed £13billion to London's economy in 2017. According to the study tourism in Southwark represents £134million gross value added to the London economy with 3,189 full time jobs. 4% of all bed spaces in London are in Southwark, or 6,092 bedrooms. The report and a sub-regional response (including in the light of potential Brexit impacts) is being considered by Central London Forward, of which Southwark is a member.</p> <p>At their meeting on 16 July Cabinet received a report on the mid-term review of the cultural strategy, including agreement to move forward with plans for a Southwark</p>

			<p>Cultural Compact. The report highlights the importance of culture in supporting economic growth including ensuring Southwark is a borough of cultural excellence, itself attracting visitors and tourists to the borough.</p> <p>More broadly, in June 2019 the Cabinet agreed to the launch, development and delivery of the Southwark Pioneers Fund. This will include making grants available to businesses and social enterprises and organisation from Oct 2019 on activities that deliver improved social value. Although not Brexit specific, the fund represents an important opportunity for local businesses to grow locally in an increasingly uncertain environment whilst delivery the Council's broader social value aims as set out in the Council Plan.</p>
18	<p>The evidence gathered by the Brexit Panel overwhelmingly made the case that remaining in the EU would be beneficial for Southwark. The panel calls on cabinet to continue to press for the best outcome for Southwark and to strongly make the case, on behalf of the 72% of residents who voted to Remain and based on the clear evidence gathered by the panel, that Southwark would be better off if the UK were to remain in the EU.</p>	<p>Cabinet note the findings of the panel.</p>	<p>The council at all levels continues to make representations through regional and national arrangements for clear guidance and support from government for all Southwark's residents on the impact of UK withdrawal from the EU.</p>