

BREXIT PREPARATION

To: **Audit and Accounts Committee**

Date: **28 January 2020**

From: **Sue Grace – Director Customer and Digital Services**
Adrian Chapman – Service Director Communities and Safety

Electoral Division(s): **All**

Purpose: **To inform the Committee about preparations for Brexit**

Key Issues: **None**

Recommendation: **To note and comment on the information within this report**

| <i>Officer contact:</i> | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Name: | Jane Heath | Stewart Thomas |
| Post: | Senior Transformation Advisor | Emergency Planning Manager |
| Email: | jane.heath@cambridgeshire.gov.uk | Stewart.thomas@cambridgeshire.gov.uk |
| Tel: | 01223 703563 | 01223 727944 |

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the time of writing, the United Kingdom (UK) is set to leave the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 with a withdrawal deal. This will be followed by a period of transition until 31 December 2020 during which time the UK will still follow the European Union's rules and regulations whilst the Government negotiates to get all its new rules and policies in place. These negotiations will determine what the future relationship with the EU will look like. Therefore, it is imperative that the Council continues to work with Central Government and our regional and local partners to identify the potential impacts of this on our organisation, our staff, our local economy and our residents.
- 1.2 This report updates Members on the preparations that have been taking place since the last report, presented to this Committee on 28 March 2019, and since the subsequent monthly updates, the last one being circulated in November 2019.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The Brexit Officer Taskforce has continued to review information coming from Government, and through our professional networks, to ensure we are focusing on the key issues. It is supported by regular meetings and online communication.
- 2.2 Working across Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council our focus is on our statutory responsibilities and our customers in their interaction with council services. As more information becomes available, we will do all we can to support our communities and prepare our workforce for the future.
- 2.3 On 24 December 2019 both Councils received a letter from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirming that No Deal preparations were being stood down at a national level and that MHCLG did not require any further reporting from Local Resilience Forums on No Deal preparations. This letter confirmed that the focus now is on the delivery aspects of the current Deal, the future relationship negotiations and preparing for the end of the implementation period.
- 2.4 However, many of the themes that we had been considering continue to be relevant. Our view of the priority themes for this coming period are:
 - Keeping abreast of the latest information and progress on the EU Settlement Scheme including:
 - Identifying vulnerable people who may not understand the requirements and signposting them for support.
 - Identifying and supporting children and young people in care and care leavers, who are EU citizens, to apply for Settled Status.
 - Monitoring updated information on the EU Settlement Scheme and how it impacts on the workforce of both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, and also on the workforce of the services that we

commission. This includes raising awareness and providing information to encourage affected personnel to apply for Settled Status.

- Keeping abreast of the latest information such as the revised immigration policy, so we understand changes to rules for recruiting staff from outside the UK, or the new trade deals so we understand the impact on key sectors in our local economy.
- Maintaining a watching brief on the latest position with regard to EU funding.
- Monitoring the position on Regulations and Legislation, including procurement and data protection regulations.

- 2.5 We will be reviewing our Communications Strategy and our Community Engagement Strategy. The Communications Strategy includes a page on both Councils' websites which is regularly updated. This directs people to Government sources of information.
- 2.6 As part of our activity with our own workforce around Settled Status Peterborough City Council have approached two employees who have applied for and been given Settled Status with a view to developing case studies that can be shared with the rest of the workforce. One of these case studies has now been published.
- 2.7 Service leads continue to work with our commissioned services, such as care providers, to ensure that plans are in place for their workforce. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council carried out an audit to understand what Business Continuity Plans were in place from Adult Social Care providers and ongoing assurance of provider Business Continuity Plans is embedded within regular contract monitoring. We continue to support providers in their planning, including ensuring regular two way communication on government guidance, advice and evolving issues; sharing of best practice and engagement in system wide and regional planning events to ensure wider learning and a co-ordinated approach.
- 2.8 We are continuing to proactively source all available information to better inform our work and our citizens. This includes distributing Government updates to relevant parties, participating in calls into Government as well as researching their online content. We are directly engaging with the Local Government Association and the Strategic Migration Partnership. For instance on the 15 January officers were involved in a telecom with local authority partners for an update on the EU Settlement scheme and the East of England Local Government Association has requested regular updates on the economic and business impacts of EU exit, and subsequently transition, planning – this is led by the Combined Authority.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Our most recent taskforce meeting was on 13 January 2020. We will review the nature and the frequency of our meetings as more information becomes available.

| Source Documents | Location |
|------------------|----------|
| None | N/A |