

COUNTY COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2018

WRITTEN QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.2

1. Question from Councillor Graham Wilson

Exiting the EU is likely to have major implications for the County Council, its staff, service users and suppliers.

Most of the public sector and much of business is following Government advice and planning for both a Deal (leaving the EU on 29 March under the negotiated withdrawal agreement) and No Deal exit from the EU.

Whilst many of the implications of EU Exit are still largely unknown, the Council already anticipates, for example, a significant impact on the independent sector workforce. A survey undertaken by Skills for Care suggests that c.24% of the existing workforce are from non-UK European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Soft market feedback has indicated that whilst local providers believe EU Exit will only have marginal impact on the existing workforce, they say it will have an adverse impact on their ability to expand. This is already a market under strain.

Please will the Leader and Chair of the General Purposes Committee explain:

- The exit scenarios he is planning for
- The risks, challenges and impacts he envisages
- The mitigation measures he is taking to ensure the County Council is as well prepared as possible for exiting the EU

Response from Councillor Count, Leader and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee

There are a number of areas of activity currently underway in preparation for Brexit, all of which are interdependent:

A review of our **Emergency Planning** in relation to possible Brexit scenarios, which reflects both the multi-agency response across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and a review of situations which would be covered by existing emergency plans (for example fuel shortages, power cuts, etc.). Consideration of the resilience implications of Brexit are being addressed with partners within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Resilience Forum and our Director Corporate and Customer Services will be discussing the issue further in detail at the CPLRF Strategic Board in December.

The Corporate Risk Group has met to discuss **Risk Management** for the impacts of Brexit and to agree the right way of taking risks associated with Brexit into account in Council planning and management processes. The Group has recommended adding a risk around the short-term impacts of Brexit to our Corporate Risk Register once an impact assessment has been completed.

The Section 151 Officer and Finance team have been working through a series of guidance and technical notes issued from Central Government to model the possible **Economic and Financial** implications of Brexit.

Our Director of Communities and Safety and his teams have been working in and with community forums and District Council partners to consider the **impact for local communities** and developing communication and response plans and the Director of Public Health is staying in touch with health system planning through the Local Health Resilience Partnership.

The Transformation Team is coordinating development of a **Brexit Impact Assessment** to cover both Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC). Based upon the advice from the Corporate Risk Group and informed by the advice and technical notes which have been provided by national government, the Impact Assessment will focus on the services of the two councils, statutory responsibilities and customers in their interaction with council services. The focus will be on the immediate short term issues and potential impacts rather than the likelihood of different scenarios, which are beyond the Council's control. Work to date indicates potential impact for workforce, funding, community cohesion, regulation and transport.

Service teams are considering potential impacts relevant to their particular **service delivery and service users** and developing action plans either to directly mitigate against impact or to work with partners to ensure appropriate responses are being developed. For example, Brexit is already having an impact on parts of the Health and Care workforce and Adults Services are developing recruitment and retention action plans and liaising closely with partners in health services.

The above areas of work are being informed by research, workshop sessions and meetings with services, senior leaders, Members and partners to identify, agree and evaluate potential impact and risk. The work is under continuous review by our Strategic Management Team and will be formally considered by General Purposes Committee and Audit and Accounts Committee in January.

2. Question from Councillor Susan van de Ven

As Leader of the Council, what are you doing to improve staff morale this Christmas?

Response from Councillor Count, Leader and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee

As Leader of the Council I am most concerned with delivering good quality services to residents of Cambridgeshire – at a cost that they can afford. This relies on having the right number of motivated and hard working staff in roles to deliver services to a good standard. So when my administration has been looking at ways to deliver a balanced budget in-year and for the years ahead, against a national picture of increasing demand, we have always prioritised suggestions that transform our services and increase income from commercial ventures and avoided wherever possible those which will lead to service cuts and associated job losses.

I am focussed on this all year round, not just at Christmas.

I have been discussing this approach with some of our excellent staff who I meet as part of 'back to the floor' sessions, as has our Chief Executive Gillian Beasley, who has been posting regular video blogs about her recent meetings with staff.

In November I spent some time with the Children with Learning disabilities team, both as a group and in one to one session. Everyone was very candid in telling me about their work. In that team I observed that a real strength was their morale which was very high. This was due to the team acting as a unit and being mutually supportive of each other. I deliberately opened the door to conversations regarding the funding situation and I found that while everyone would like more money for their services, there was a recognition and a strength of pride that we still provided a good service.

There was a definite unity in seeing all of us in the Council in being in this together – which is why I have put forward the motion today that all Councillors will volunteer to participate in the three days mandatory unpaid leave which staff earning more than £26k a year will have this year – by taking a 1.2% cut in our allowances, helping to safeguard up to 40 jobs in the coming year.

I am interested to hear what actions Councillor van de Ven and her colleagues will suggest to balance our budget, which will avoid any impact on services or staff.

3. Question from Councillor Lorna Dupre

How many Vehicle Activated Speed signs have been decommissioned by the council in each of the last two years for reasons of unserviceability? Of these, how many have been (or are in the process of being) replaced by parish councils or other bodies? Where VAS — which were presumably installed for a reason — are not being replaced, how is the council monitoring the effect on road safety in those locations?

Response from Councillor Shuter, Chairman of Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee

Over the last 20 years there have been over 360 Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) signs installed throughout the county. Over this period, around 50 of the signs have been removed, mainly due to vehicle damage, lack of available spare parts or because another highway scheme has meant they are no longer necessary.

It is not easy to say exactly how many signs have been removed over the last 2 years as such removal is often part of a larger scheme and so there is no single record of removals. However, what is clear through a recent review with our specialist contractor, is that there are quite a number of signs (50 have been identified) that are not working and can't easily be repaired. These signs are being removed as they cause confusion when not working. In recent weeks, around 10 have been removed and the remainder of the 50 will be removed shortly.

As signs are removed the local County Member and Parish Council are contacted to make them aware of the situation and to remind the community about the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme. The scheme enables communities to bid for funding to install and run mobile, battery powered signs within their area, moving the signs themselves between various locations. A number of Parishes have already taken advantage of this scheme, with some now actively requesting removal of our non-working signs so they can use the old sign post to attach their own battery powered signs. Moveable signs have a larger impact on excessive speeds than the fixed signs being removed. In addition to the LHI scheme a community can also fully fund a project to provide their own sign.

The Council's Road Safety team are involved in the process and are notified when a sign is identified for removal within an area where large numbers of personal injury accidents remain in the immediate vicinity. Where resources allow the team may then choose to replace a non-working sign if it is justified. All roads in the county are automatically monitored to identify abnormal increases in accident rates and accident cluster sites.