

Local Government Preparedness for Brexit

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report updates members of the LGA Leadership Board on the work that the LGA has been undertaking to support councils on work related to Britain's exit from the EU.

Recommendation

That the LGA Leadership Board consider the report and raise any other issues that need to be captured in our Brexit work.

Action

Officers to take forward any actions identified.

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Local Government Preparedness for Brexit

Background

1. This report sets out the headlines of local government preparedness for Brexit. It reviews the work that has been undertaken and anticipates the key issues.
2. The report sets out:
 - 2.1. Summer Brexit preparations update;
 - 2.2. The LGA's work to date;
 - 2.3. The LGA's role in Brexit preparedness;
 - 2.4. Current issues.

Summer Brexit preparations update

3. Since the new Government has taken office, there has been a new central planning assumption to direct Whitehall's work and this has been communicated to councils should prepare for "no deal" Brexit. After his appointment, the new Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, called an immediate EU Exit Ministerial Delivery Board at the end of July. This provided members of the LGA Brexit Taskforce with an opportunity to raise a number of Brexit related issues, including the immediate risks and the longer term opportunities that Brexit will bring.
4. In August, the Secretary of State outlined that £20 million will be allocated to councils to support Brexit preparations and that each council was invited to nominate a Brexit lead who will coordinate information with MHCLG. He also held a Webinar on 13 August where over 300 council leaders, chief executives and Brexit leads heard him outline some of the key issues the Government will be addressing. This was welcomed by the sector.
5. As we head into the autumn, the preparations are likely to speed up and the recommencement of the weekly key issue reporting from councils through the nine chief executives network. This is the opportunity to ensure that our risks and opportunities are clear.

The LGA's work to date

6. Since the referendum, the LGA has remained neutral on the UK's membership of the EU. This has allowed us to put forward the risks and opportunities councils have told us the Government should be addressing.
7. Through the LGA's cross-party Brexit Taskforce and their membership of the EU Exit Ministerial Delivery, members have been raising councils concerns to ministers. This has

resulted in a number of successes, including a Government guarantee for EU funding in a “no deal” scenario and the agreement for a central communications hub for local government.

8. Through the LGA’s role, we have provided Government with clarity of issues for councils and have successfully put these issues on the Government’s agenda. Where we have not been able to resolve issues, concerns have been clearly on the record.

LGA’s role in Brexit Preparations to October

9. As we approach the 31 October, the demands on councils are likely to increase. In terms of the LGA role, we will be prioritising the Government facing work helping to confirm LA priorities, risks and opportunities and trying to ensure that Government communications are coordinated at place. Key issues that the LGA can support councils by working closely with Whitehall to resolve include:

- 9.1. Ensuring the Government has the right information and resources to prepare;

- 9.2. Making sure the advice is relevant to local places, considering delivery and training needs; and

- 9.3. Highlighting gaps in formation or the unintended consequences of national policy.

10. Our role with Government and Parliament has helped to establish that councils are as prepared as they can be, whilst being clear about the resource and information gaps that councils are facing.

11. We are focusing our work on issues where further national advice is needed in preparing for the UK’s immediate exit from the EU. These include:

- 11.1. Regulatory services

- 11.2. Ports of entry

- 11.3. Business support and ability to react to economic shocks and opportunities

- 11.4. Community cohesion

- 11.5. Procurement

- 11.6. UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- 11.7. EU Settlement Scheme – particularly vulnerable children and adults

- 11.8. Impact on councils to changes in UK/EU migration policy – particularly adult social care

- 11.9. Food distribution

- 11.10. Data.

12. The LGA will also continue to promote the longer term opportunities from Brexit and the need to progress these issues in the short term. These include:

- 12.1. Funding and Growth
- 12.2. Devolution and reform of EU laws
- 12.3. Local authority rights to influence future laws
- 12.4. Skills
- 12.5. Trade.

13. We will continue to monitor and assess how councils are getting advice to ensure that they are best prepared for the UK's exit from the EU.

Current Issues

14. The issues that arise in preparing for Brexit are constantly changing. Therefore, a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Implications for Wales

15. We continue to develop our work on Brexit in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Northern Ireland Local Government Association, ensuring a united UK local government voice in the debate.

Next Steps

16. That the LGA Leadership Board consider the report and raise any other issues that need to be captured in our Brexit work.