LEEDS STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN – UNITED KINGDOM’S EXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

This plan is a framework for a response to Brexit to enable the council and city to be as prepared as possible given the resources and information available. It is intended to be adaptable to a range of exit scenarios as required, including “no deal”, which has been informed by the national planning assumptions and guidance where available. It builds upon the work that has been done since previous Executive Board papers, and will continue to develop as further preparations are undertaken by directorates and city partners, and as further guidance and planning assumptions are issued by central government.

Aims and objectives of this plan:

- Demonstrate the values, ambition and vision of the council, city and beyond.
- Co-ordinate a joined-up and proactive response in the city, suitable for the short, medium and long term within the resources and information available.
- Effectively support individuals, families, businesses and communities affected.
- Keep it simple and avoid duplication, staying flexible and learn from experience and best practice.

CURRENT POSITION AS AT OCTOBER 2020

- Following the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill 2019-20 being granted Royal Assent, the UK left the European Union on 31st January 2020. From this point the UK entered into the current 11-month ‘transition period’ that ends 31st December 2020.
- Following the granting of an extension the no deal preparations had been stood down, and with the COVID19 pandemic there was a pause in some preparations as resources were redirected to tackle the immediate threat of the virus. However with the end of transition growing closer, national preparations and guidance are increasing and the local response is following suit. Guidance and information primarily comes from .gov.uk website along with feedback from direct contact with central Government.
- Impact continues to be significant given ongoing uncertainty with possible economic and community impacts, understanding and responding to the Leeds Economic Brexit Impact Assessment, the potential for national elections to be called at short notice, and wider policy implications such as the EU Settlement Scheme, officially launched in March 2019, with the council continuing to provide support to those citizens affected.
- The Brexit Officer Working Group has again met, and will continue to meet regularly, maintaining oversight of council Brexit preparations.
- The Member’s Brexit working groups has met again in October 2020 continuing to inform local Brexit preparations.
- Active engagement with the West Yorkshire LRF and city partners (as part of business as usual arrangements) has been maintained, as well as Leeds playing an active role in Yorkshire and Humber given the lead role the Chief Executive performs.
- Priorities for the council continue to be:
  - Maintaining momentum on the council and city’s preparations;
  - Dealing with uncertainty and its impacts;
  - Supporting EU citizens in Leeds to secure their rights;
  - Taking a proportionate approach over the coming weeks and months.
The table below details a range of actions being taken as part of the council’s Brexit response, structured around five interrelated headings. Communications and reporting arrangements in support of these actions will continue to meet the local, regional and national demands. The plan is supported by an accompanying communications strategy and activity plan.

Each action has a named lead officer within Leeds City Council. These individuals will liaise with other internal colleagues, partner organisations and others as required in order to provide the assurance needed on progress.

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<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Officer lead(s)</th>
<th>Status / Comments</th>
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| 1.1     | Work with relevant authorities, agencies and partners including emergency services, WYCA and Highways England to respond to disruption to key infrastructure such as the motorway network, ports, airports etc. | Gary Bartlett           | • Plans are ready and relationships with key partners are in place.  
• Leeds Bradford Airport is low risk due to low level of air freight.  
• Discussions and preparations around supplies especially fuel and resources taking place.  
• Humber LRF continue to work on a range of scenarios for dealing with potential issues at the ports, updating this when new information becomes available such as publication in Oct 2020 of Government RWCS. Effective liaison is in place between the LRFs across Y&H. |
| 1.2     | Assess the potential impact on key digital infrastructure and required action. | Andrew Byrom            | • Further information expected from government imminently. Service being proactive.  
• International Data Transfers Working Group identifying and remediying those situations where data transfers will be affected by No Deal Brexit. |
| 1.3     | Assess the possible impact on key supply chains and required actions, in particular regarding:  
  a) Fuel supplies, including emergency provision  
  b) Food shortages, for both consumers and contracted catering services  
  c) Power supplies, including availability of IT equipment | Terry Pycroft  
Mandy Snaithe  
Andrew Byrom  
Victoria Eaton | Fuel  
• Plans and procedures in place and relevant stakeholders aware of arrangements under the national and local fuel emergency plan.  
• Brexit is not anticipated to cause significant disruption to the supply of fuel in the UK, monitoring potential increase in prices due to currency fluctuations.  
Food  
• Planning and assessment continues about supply chain and alternatives. |
| d) Supplies of medicines and medical equipment, including stockpiling arrangements | • Ongoing concerns about food banks and food poverty given national planning assumptions which suggest limited/localised shortages but some price increases.  
• School meals provision - service formulated a risk register to assess and mitigate any potential impact to schools meal provision as a result of disruption to the food supply chain and any potential for increased costs as a result of increased demand to supply.  
Supply of medicines and medical supplies  
• Continuing to be monitored through existing Health and Social Care partnership arrangements as national information is updated and local issues considered. |

### 2. Business and economic impact

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<tr>
<th>2.1 Work with the LEP to understand what support packages will be provided to business and whether existing schemes can have flex to accommodate businesses currently excluded but who are likely to see a significant impact from Brexit.</th>
<th>Fiona Bolam</th>
<th>• Continuing to work with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) colleagues about relevant schemes being flexible, how larger businesses can be supported, and voucher schemes for SMEs. Utilising local capacity to support businesses where possible.</th>
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<td>2.2 Ensure effective dissemination of relevant information to businesses, e.g. specific sectoral/issues-based guidance issued by central government.</td>
<td>Fiona Bolam</td>
<td>• Information and signposting is on WYCA website and to the gov.uk website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3 Prompting and supporting businesses to undertake their own Brexit preparations, including signposting to support.</td>
<td>Fiona Bolam</td>
<td>• Information and signposting is on WYCA website and to the gov.uk website.</td>
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| 2.4 Utilise key existing relationships with business and representative bodies to ensure effective two-way communications and sharing of relevant data and information. In particular consider intelligence required to inform decisions at regional and national level. | Eve Roodhouse | • Business roundtable events in 2019 and 2020 (including one in October 2020) for both business representative organisations and business intermediaries.  
• Further business engagement continues throughout the Coronavirus pandemic response with businesses and intermediary organisations. Calls with business representative organisations take place every two |
weeks and further engagement with KAMs. Although focused primarily on COVID also discussing key Brexit concerns.
- Further consultation has been undertaken through the economic impact study.

• Monitoring is continuing through local intelligence gathering.  
• Considering options to commission further targeted work to explore such as supply chain impacts and opportunities. |
| 2.6 | Provide proactive business support activity to respond to emerging challenges, build resilience and reduce risks to normal business operations – in particular considering the effects of uncertainty. | Phil Cole | • Prolonged uncertainty remains a key challenge.  
• Business support team officers allocated to specific funded projects where possible. Considering how to scale additional capacity. |

### 3. Citizens and Communities impact

| 3.1 | Ensure community understanding of their rights and the EU settlement processes, including implementing clear signposting. | Shaid Mahmood/ Bash Uppal | • Most events and activities halted due to COVID 19, however prior to this several events had taken place, including events led/supported by Ambassadors to the UK.  
• Virtual weekly drop-in arranged and led by Migration Team in partnership with Customer Access to support complex cases and signpost to Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre.  
• St Vincent’s in Leeds funding has received further funding to support complex cases.  
• Council signed up to provide digital assistance to the community, as well as ID checking service (free service) in five community hubs. Paused as a result of COVID19 and will resume first week in October 2020 at Merrion House.  
• LCC website page with guidance and toolkits for residents and businesses. (Link to website is here.) to check  
• LCC EU Settlement Scheme Outreach project had supported “hard to reach” EU communities. £20k was allocated to a total of six VCFS organisations to support activity which has ended.  
• Regular engagement with Home Office officials continues.  
• Participation at regional quarterly meetings to share best practice and learning. |
### Key next steps
- Implications for employment sectors following introduction of new immigration bill, EUSS, and exit from EU.
- Cross Council working group led by Communities and Safer Leeds progressing and monitoring community tensions.
- Community tensions monitoring process set up with WY Police to understand and respond to any intelligence.
- Surveys and events with social care providers to understand implications of EU Exit, support preparations and to understand direct impact on care providers.
- LCC assessing business continuity plans for providers where possible.
- Regular engagement with partners (e.g. health and schools) regarding Brexit preparations continuing including in relation to the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Ongoing conversations with partners in health and social care to ensure planning for winter includes implications of EU Exit alongside COVID19.
- Third Sector Action Plan in place following March 2019 event with regular engagement on joint implementation, includes aspects of EUSS, community tensions response and communications.
- ADASS survey re: the effect on adult social care staffing completed September 2019.
- Children looked after team working closely with affected children to ensure right to stay in UK post Brexit.
- Local Welfare Support Scheme has the capacity and ability to respond to increases in demand. Robust monitoring in place and flexibility of support is built into the scheme.
- Event with elected members around counter extremism and hate crime and advice available.
- Advice issued to elected members about safety.
- Updated on EUSS, providing members with guidance on support and promotional materials, including links with parish and town councils.

### 3.2 Proactively monitor community tensions, provide reassurance and respond appropriately when required.

| Shaid Mahmood/ Bash Uppal |

### 3.3 Effective liaison and engagement with partners to ensure a joined up approach to Brexit preparation and response, including with:
- Schools
- Higher/further education institutions
- Health sector
- Social care
- Third sector
- Faith organisations/leaders

| Tim Pouncey  
Sue Wynne  
Victoria Eaton  
Steve Hume / Caroline Baria  
Shaid Mahmood  
Bash Uppal |

### 3.4 Ensure capability to respond to increased demand for hardship payments if required.

| Andrew Cameron |

### 3.5 Ensure appropriate information is provided to elected members to enable them to support the community in their wards.

| Shaid Mahmood |

### 4. Media and communications
| 4.1 | Develop and implement Brexit communications to support response. | Danielle Clayton | • Communications and supporting activity in place, including primary source webpage ([here](#)) to signpost to government website.  
• Targeted local messages to be developed around emerging issues as they occur, such as around support for foodbanks within the council. |
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>Monitor, respond and support traditional and social media on Brexit at a city level – communicating developments while highlighting Leeds as open for business.</td>
<td>Nick Moore/Danielle Clayton /Donna Cox (via all channel owners)</td>
<td>• Ongoing – no major issues flagged.</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
<td>Capture the scale of enquiries, activity and impact through communications channels.</td>
<td>Danielle Clayton /Donna Cox</td>
<td>• Ongoing – no major issues flagged.</td>
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| 4.4 | Regularly update key stakeholders across the council and city, in particular:  
- Cabinet, other elected members and MPs.  
- CLT, BCLT, Brexit working group  
- Key partners including WYCA, LEP, LRF and Health  
- Regular updates to Executive Board | Mariana Pexton | • Executive Board reports – March/September/October/November 2019, January 2020.  
• Corporate Governance and Audit report.  
• Full Council and R&H Scrutiny Board – September 2019, February 2020  
• Update sent to Leeds MPs September 2019. |
| 4.5 | Ensure Government returns are handled and responses issued in a timely manner including Yorkshire and Humber LA regional returns. | Mariana Pexton | • Met all deadlines. |
| 4.6 | Use existing relationships with local media to seek to mitigate community tensions which may arise. | Donna Cox | • Ongoing |
| 4.7 | Ensure effective dissemination of public information, relevant advice and support to individuals, communities and partners. | Danielle Clayton | • Utilise government-produced communications toolkit for materials.  
• Updated our guidance documents and internet landing page with relevant Government communications toolkit including “Get Ready for Brexit” and more recently the “Check Change Go” transition messages.  
• Other communications tools, e.g. email footers developed to share key messages.  
• Toolkits for schools, children’s centres, care homes.  
• Social media promotion  
• Key message bulleting and e-newsletters |

5. Organisational impact
| 5.1  | Ensure joined-up cross-departmental approach to Brexit preparation and response within the council. | Neil Evans | • Officer working group met again in October 2020.  
• Working Group reconvened again and meeting approximately every month. |
| 5.2  | Agree clear roles and responsibilities amongst key public sector partners for preparation and response phases. | Neil Evans | • Facilitated through this response plan with LCC leads liaising with partner organisations as appropriate.  
• The Environmental Health Team are responsible for ensuring that private water supplies to both businesses and residential dwellings are safe and useable. Water companies have confirmed they will be able to support private companies in the event of a shortage of treatment chemicals. |
| 5.3  | Facilitating effective information sharing and communication between the council and the West Yorkshire LRF. | Mariana Pexton | • Being effectively co-ordinated through active role in LRF and sub groups. |
| 5.4  | Ensuring effective information sharing between the Council, Local NHS Partners and the West Yorkshire Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP). | Victoria Eaton | • Being effectively co-ordinated through co-chair arrangement of WY LHRP. |
| 5.5  | Ongoing assessment of the robustness and readiness of business continuity plans for the council’s critical services – to be implemented as required. | Nigel Street | • Complete review was undertaken by Resilience and Emergencies team and plans refreshed where needed.  
• On 05.03.20, all managers and officers responsible for LCC’s critical services were requested to review their Business Continuity Plans in readiness for the potential impact of COVID 19. All Business Continuity Plans were reviewed. The annual review process ensures that Business Continuity Plans continue to reflect the continuity needs of the service, are maintained and up to date. |
<p>| 5.6  | Agree in advance the temporary structures and ways of working which will come into play should an emergency situation arise – including at both centre corporate co-ordination and directorate/service levels. | Neil Evans / CLT | • Ongoing. |
| 5.7  | Identify council service budgets which may require additional financial investment or underwriting as a result of reduced income or increased expenditure. Consider most | Victoria Bradshaw | • Council awarded funds as per formula. Used for priority areas (Brexit economic Impact Assessment, Settlement Scheme, coordination and communication). |</p>
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<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 5.8 | Track impact on council workforce affected by Brexit, including staff welfare, intervening as required. | Jessica Dolphin | - LCC staff alerted to Settlement Scheme including via internal website (InSite).  
- Messages issued to reassure staff and provide options for welfare support through HELP, linking into the new corporate wellbeing offer.  
- Trade Union working group established to maintain dialogue on Brexit and address issues as needed; identified this may need to be restarted as it has not met since lockdown however no urgent issues on Brexit have been raised. |
| 5.9 | Consider the impact of staff redeployment due to Brexit response activity and/or wider related loss of staff. | Jessica Dolphin | - Starters/leavers tracked monthly to establish if turnover patterns and labour demand are being affected – no patterns are emerging and we are not anticipating a change at present.  
- Dialogue with health partners and schools ongoing.  
- Current and emerging work permit schemes to be tracked and considered with advice given to LCC managers, plus schools.  
- Options for flexible deployment and other cover arrangements to release capacity to support response activity to be considered as required. Opportunity to learn from our agile response to COVID and utilise our reallocation pool of staff. |
| 5.10 | Consider need to review Best Council Plan, other relevant council strategies and our risk management approach as new intelligence arises. | Coral Main | - Review of strategies has been undertaken – majority very high level so not affected, underpinning activity may be however.  
- Brexit will feed into the next update to the Best Council Plan (currently scheduled early 2021).  
- Brexit risk is taken into account in corporate risk report. Review of corporate Brexit risk underway. IPS reviewing all corporate risks to identify Brexit-related implications (especially economic and community resilience) and feed into risk owners’ consideration as part of their updates. |
| 5.11 | Ensure regular dialogue with council contractors and suppliers to identify any potential supply chain challenges early. | Dean Backhouse | - Procurement continue to engage with suppliers/contractors as required; updated procurement and tender documents to ensure future bidders must take Brexit risk into account in their tenders. |
Review ongoing regulatory changes as a result of Brexit to understand consequences, including but not limited to:
- Data protection and data transfers
- Export certificates
- Procurement regulations

Further updates to be incorporated

Louise Whitworth  
Paul Spandler  
Dean Backhouse

- Officers are authorised and procedures are in place to issue export certificates for food products on request by food businesses. Additionally, Environmental Health have contacted known potential exporters of animal products to EU to discuss their future export certification requirements and provide guidance.
- Food Standards Agency have released further updated guidance on exports in July 2020 which has been disseminated to authorised officers.
- Environmental Health arranged a visit by the FSA Imports Delivery Branch, including to Environmental Health and Leeds-Bradford Airport, to discuss current arrangements and any future potential direct importation of food to the airport.
- The public procurement regulations relating to EU exit have been published and will make various technical amendments to EU-derived UK procurement legislation reflecting the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.
- An explanatory memorandum published with the above indicates that the framework and principles underlying the existing UK procurement regime remain unchanged in most respects.
- Procurement and Commercial Services will review the documents above and provide guidance to procurement/commissioning officers within the Council. They will also undertake a review of procurement documentation to ensure the terms used are appropriate post-Brexit.
- Data protection guidance issued to local authorities by MHCLG. DIS considering and progressing required action.
- LCC completed the Government survey on personal data flows in the event of a no-deal Brexit in 2019 and analysed any potential business impact on our data storage arrangements being affect in this event.