

**Report to:** EXECUTIVE CABINET

**Date:** 25 September 2019

**Executive Member/ Reporting Officer:** Cllr Brenda Warrington Executive Leader  
Steven Pleasant Chief Executive

**Subject:** EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Report Summary:** Tameside Council to date has received £209,668 to prepare for Exiting the European Union. This report recommends that authority for spending on preparations be delegated to the Chief Executive as Lead Brexit Officer for Tameside Council. The deadline for exiting the European Union is currently 31 October 2019.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that Executive Cabinet that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive as Lead Brexit Officer for Tameside Council to administer, prioritise and spend the defined budget devolved from Government in preparing for Leaving the European Union.


**Corporate Plan:** Exiting the European Union will cover all areas of delivering the Corporate Plan.


**Financial Implications:** Funding of £210k has been made available and has been received by the Council. There is an indication that further funding will also be forthcoming from the government. If the risks highlighted materialise there is likely to be a large ongoing impact on revenue and capital budgets if staffing and supply shortages result in increases to prices, or tariffs on imports from the EU in particular are passed on to consumers. Any impact of recession will impact on Business Rate income and the level of Council Tax support that will need to be paid. It is impossible though at this stage to fully understand the financial impact on the Council of these events given the uncertainty around the eventual exit terms.

**Legal Implications:** Whilst delegation determines who will make the decision it does not obviate the necessary legal requirements for dealing with transparency and openness of decision making set out in the 2014 regulations made under the Local Government Act 2000. Accordingly there will need to be executive decisions for any spend over £100K or aggregate of the same. Any spend in excess of the allocated budget will need a key decision and an amendment to the budget by Council.

**Risk Management:** Exiting the European Union requires the Council to plan and understand risks effectively and work with partners to mitigate the potential impact of those risks.

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer, David Berry, Head of Employment and Skills

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September 2019 all Local Authorities were asked to appoint a Brexit Lead Officer. This role will be fulfilled by the Chief Executive for Tameside Council (TMBC). In January 2019 Tameside Council received confirmed funding of £209,668 to prepare for Exiting the European Union. This funding was equally split over the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20. This report recommends that Executive Cabinet delegate, to the Chief Executive, the administration, prioritisation and spending of defined budget available to Tameside Council for Exiting the European Union.

## **2.0 PREPARATIONS**

2.1 TMBC is working with partners at a local, regional and national level to prepare for the United Kingdom Exiting the European Union on the 31 October 2019. The funding available to support preparations will be aligned to business planning, business continuity planning and risk assessments to mitigate any potential impacts. With delegated authority on spending the Lead Brexit Officer will be enabled to support preparations in line with wider developments.

2.2 TMBC has utilised the Local Government Brexit Preparedness technical notices to supplement our local and regional preparation work with partners including Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Agencies from across Greater Manchester continue to meet monthly, to consider possible impacts arising from Brexit and to ensure appropriate preparatory actions are being taken.

2.3 At the GMCA level preparations are underway or being considered in the following areas:

- **BORDERS** – Manchester Airport is liaising directly with Government, as a point of entry to the UK. Assurances have been received regarding ongoing airport operations for both passengers and freight. Port Salford and City Airport are not considered points of entry to the UK.
- **TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE** - Assessments are ongoing to ensure transport and infrastructure projects continue.
- **HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE** – Preparations for the health sector will be led nationally by NHS England and Department for Health. There has been no requirement for local NHS to stockpile any medicines or medical supplies. The most significant risk area identified is the reliance on EU workers in the health & social care sector, and how this will be impacted going forward. Work has been undertaken to support health and care workers to complete the EU settlement scheme. As preparations ramp up towards October, local agencies will again engage and align with the national model.
- **FOOD, WATER & ENERGY** - Activity will be led by the Local Resilience Forum, liaising with national government as required, ensuring continuation of supplies and services.
- **BUSINESS & ECONOMY** - Ongoing activity to support GM businesses and raise awareness of the need to ensure preparations are underway for the changes resulting from Brexit. Concern has been raised regarding the preparedness of the SME sector specifically. Growth Company activities to support businesses in their preparations for Brexit have been increased, and ensuring use of the online Brexit toolkit. A multi-agency Economic Resilience Taskforce has been established, bringing together key GM bodies to try to ensure a coherent and comprehensive package of support as possible is provided to businesses and individuals facing any

threat of redundancy should we exit under a no deal scenario or an economic downturn occurs.

- **ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT** - Regular reporting requirements to Government have reduced since the Brexit extension, information is however being provided on request. Engagement across working groups, analysis of impact data released, and direct departmental requests for information and local Brexit planning information have been undertaken. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have also written to BEIS Secretary of State outlining Greater Manchester's proposed integrated response package in the event of an economic downturn.
- **CIVIL CONTINGENCIES** - Work has been undertaken to understand possible impacts on current and future risk scenarios, in both the short and medium terms. Also, work has been delivered to ensure agencies have in place up to date and robust business continuity plans. Scenario based planning exercises have taken place, and the Local Resilience Forum continues to consider possible impacts arising.
- **HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR** - Work has been undertaken to understand the possible impacts on the numbers of EU students and lecturers. Early testing of the EU settlement scheme was used in the sector and support continues to be provided to ensure EU citizens apply for settled status. Assurances continue to be sought from Government for future EU research funding.
- **ORGANISATIONAL READINESS & IMPACTS** – Public sector organisations have been considering the possible impacts on their own operations arising from Brexit, including workforce and legal implications. As Brexit day nears, organisations have expressed concerns regarding potential capacity issues to meet the necessary reporting requirements and take the appropriate actions required. All districts and GMCA now have signposting information on their websites to support EU citizens resident in their area.
- **DATA** - Under a no-deal scenario, the flow and transfer of personal data may be impacted. Information has been shared with public sector agencies to ensure all are undertaking the necessary preparations and advice is being passed onto businesses to ensure they can put in place any necessary mitigating actions

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Preparing for the UK exiting the EU is a challenging process due to the size, scale and importance of the task within a very short and urgent timescale.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 See recommendations at the front of this report.