



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-2020

<p>OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p> <p>24th October 2019</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO. 4</p>
<p>REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE</p>	<p>PREPARING FOR A NO DEAL BREXIT</p>

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Provide an update on the work that is taking place across the Council in the event that the UK leaves the EU on the 31st October 2019, in particular in the event of a No Deal Brexit.
- 1.2 Subject to any comments, seek approval to the recommendations outlined in Section 2.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Given the uncertainties that surround when, and in what form the UK leaves the EU, Members review the update provided within this report, and consider whether they have received sufficient assurance that the Council is doing everything that it possibly can do, to prepare for a No Deal Brexit.
- 2.2 Should Members identify any other areas which they consider require further assurance, the additional actions will be included within the Council's Brexit Preparedness Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current uncertainties around when and in what form the UK leaves the EU does not enable full and informed planning, as would be desired, particularly if



there is a No Deal Brexit. However, the Council has put in place arrangements whereby it is aiming to plan, as best as it possibly can do, for the UK leaving the EU.

3.2 A Brexit Preparedness Plan is in place, and covers the following areas:

- Communication;
- Emergency Management / Business Continuity;
- EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS);
- Community Cohesion;
- Supplies and Services;
- Business and the Local Economy; and
- Foodbanks

3.3 Specific actions have been identified within the Preparedness Plan, and responsible officers have been assigned to them. The Preparedness Plan is reviewed regularly and is shared with the Senior Leadership Team. Other action has already been taken to consider / assess any risks from sharing and storing data in other EU states if there is a No Deal Brexit. We are pleased to report that the Council has no business systems at risk from this potential issue.

3.4 The Council is a member of:

- The Local Government [EU] Preparedness Advisory Panel (Central South Wales Region).
 - Each month an update of the work undertaken to prepare for Brexit is provided.
 - The work to prepare across all Councils in the region is shared, so that lessons can be learnt. This also provides the opportunity to collaborate on appropriate areas of work.
- The Local Resilience Forum.
 - In the lead-up to Brexit, meetings are taking place to discuss this specifically.
 - With effect 21st October, Operation Yellow Hammer has been re-established.

3.5 It is considered that good governance arrangements are in place in respect of monitoring our actions to prepare and to report them, internally and to external forums when required. Section 4 of this report provides an overview of the work that has taken place to prepare.

4. WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO PREPARE?



4.1 In assessing what we needed to do in order to prepare for Brexit on the 31st October, we identified the following areas:

- Our role in **raising awareness** of what our residents, our staff and local businesses should know / should be doing to prepare;
- Establishing pragmatic **continuity plans** to ensure short-term disruption to our key frontline services is minimised, as far as we can practicably plan for;
- Supporting residents to apply for the **European Union Settled Status (EUSS)** scheme, and **monitoring any underlying tensions** within our communities, and
- Working with, listening to, and **supporting local food banks** in these uncertain times.

RAISING AWARENESS

4.2 In order to raise awareness of the guidance that has been published from the UK and Welsh Government, the Council has put in place the following arrangements:

Updated website

4.3 A new '[Preparing for Brexit](#)' tab was added to the homepage of the Council's website with the aim of ensuring that it has a prominent position, for ease of access. The content was reviewed, and now provides succinct links to UK and Welsh Government sites.

4.4 The following table summarises the visits to the relevant sections of the 'Preparing for Brexit' page:

	Visits
Preparing for Brexit (Homepage)	773
Business	104
EU citizens that live in Rhondda Cynon Taf	236
Third sector organisations	61
Personal data	74

Social media

4.5 A social media campaign is now underway, which covers the following areas:



Guidance to local businesses

4.6 The Council's role in respect of supporting local businesses through Brexit is to provide the necessary links to the guidance and support that has been made available by the UK and Welsh Government. For example, the Business [Wales Brexit Toolkit](#) and the new [Welsh Government EUSS](#) website.

4.7 The information provided in **Appendix A** has been posted to the relevant / local businesses across the County Borough. This approach is in addition to the social media campaign reference in section 4.5 above.

Payslip insert to staff & members

4.8 All staff received a payroll insert in the October 2019 payroll, a copy of which is provided at **Appendix B**. As well as raising awareness of the key supporting information that has been made available on our website, it was important that we encouraged staff to share this information with friends and relatives. Also, it's important that staff are aware of this information in the event that a customer asks them.



Our workforce – EUSS

- 4.9 Following a review that was undertaken in March 2019, we were aware that a relatively small number of Council staff could be affected by the EU Settled Status (EUSS) process. During the lead-up to 31st October, we have reviewed the workforce again, and have put in place arrangements that will support and help staff to apply. We have also written to our social care providers and asked them to review their staffing compliment for colleagues who should apply for the EUSS. Again the numbers reported back are very low but we have offered our social care providers our support for these staff if required.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – KEY FRONTLINE SERVICES

- 4.10 The Council is responsible for delivering a significant number of services, the scope and complexity of which is diverse. In order to put appropriate arrangements in place to ensure continuity of services to our vulnerable customers, and also ensure that key responsibilities are delivered, we have reviewed the following service areas with a view to establishing short-term contingency arrangements:

- The provision of meals.
 - In schools, our residential homes and our meals on wheels service.
 - Alternative menus have been developed by Catering Services, and these have been designed to take into account any potential shortages of goods.
 - In the event that these contingency menus will be required, they will be initiated across the areas of the Council, as listed above.
- Ensuring that our residential homes are appropriately stocked with key supplies in the event of disruption.
 - It is imperative that these establishments are kept hygienic and clients have all of the key supplies they require, for example:
 - Cleaning / janitorial supplies;
 - Sanitary provision (hand soap, toilet paper, male & female sanitary products); and
 - Food.
 - Appropriate stocks of these commodities are in place to cover any potential short-term interruptions to supplies.
- Keeping our fleet moving
 - As the Council operates a diverse fleet, the ability to forecast what parts could be needed is difficult. Parts that have to be sourced from abroad may take longer to obtain and could cost more.



- Failure to obtain the required spares in a timely manner, will mean that the Council would have to seek support from hire companies in hiring-in similar or suitable alternative vehicles until such time as the spare parts arrive.
- Ensuring key vehicles have fuel
 - See fuel plan update at paragraph 4.15.

Continuity of Supplies and services

- 4.11 Further to the engagement that took place in the lead-up to March 2019, key suppliers of the Council have been contacted once more, to request Brexit preparedness statements.
- 4.12 In addition to this, these suppliers have been reminded of the importance to review their workforce(s) in order to implement appropriate EUSS arrangements, and the links to EUSS websites have been provided.
- 4.13 No significant issues have been identified from the responses received to date. However, some suppliers have stated that due to the uncertainties around what Brexit could mean to them, they are not in a position to provide absolute assurance, a position that the Council acknowledges.
- 4.14 In situations where a supplier identifies a potential issue, this is fed-back to the relevant service area(s), and the continuity plans are amended accordingly. For example, should the potential issue of a shortage of some fresh produce materialise, then the contingency menus in place have been designed to accommodate this.

Fuel Plan

- 4.15 Over and above the contingency plans that are in place in respect of our key frontline services, the Council has an established 'fuel plan'.
- 4.16 The fuel plan will be mobilised in the event of a national fuel shortage. The aim of the fuel plan is to ensure that prioritised Council vehicles have the appropriate fuel that could be used to deliver services, and also to transport key staff to and from their workplace(s). Should a national fuel shortage materialise, the Council will also work in partnership with Health Services to ensure that those residents that require specific appointments to be honoured are picked-up and dropped back home (dialysis patients for example).

EUROPEAN UNION SETTLED STATUS (EUSS)

- 4.17 The Home Office has identified that approximately 3,000 EU nationals reside within RCT. Unfortunately they are unable to provide any further information in



respect of where these may be located. The current data that we have suggests approximately 1,500 EU nationals reside in RCT.

- 4.18 The Council has utilised the data that it holds, and has mapped the communities across the County Borough where EU nationals reside. *NOTE: due to the GDPR, this information cannot be used to target individuals (i.e. direct letters / door knocking).*
- 4.19 We have a small team of Community Cohesion Officers for Cwm Taf, and they have been tasked with using the data that we have to help raise awareness of the EUSS.
- 4.20 We are pleased to note that the Council's Registrars Service has gained approval to [scan and verify](#) the required documentation, and this service went live to citizens with effect from 1st October 2019.

COMMUNITY COHESION

- 4.21 A team has been established and have been tasked with delivering a co-ordinated approach across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil in respect of tracking any underlying unrest, and to support EU Nationals when applying for EUSS (summarised above).
- 4.22 Feedback from South Wales Police at this stage confirms no underlying tensions associated with Brexit within our communities.

LOCAL FOODBANKS

- 4.23 The Council is mindful that foodbanks are heavily reliant on donations from individuals, and given uncertainties that surround the impact that Brexit could have there is a risk that donations drop-off in the short-term.
- 4.24 Work has taken place with the local foodbanks to establish if they have any specific concerns, and whether the Council is able provide assistance.
- 4.25 The Council has committed funding for the purchase of some items of supplies, and this is being supported and matched by Local Housing Associations.
- 4.26 The ability to provide meaningful intervention has been further bolstered, by a recent announcement from the Welsh Government that grant funding has been made available to:
- Support short-term intervention.
 - For example, purchasing additional stock of key commodities on behalf of foodbanks, and distribute accordingly.



- Potentially use the grant funding to improve the infrastructure in place at foodbanks.
 - For example, improved storage / cold storage facilities such as fridges and freezers.

4.27 A meeting has taken place with the local foodbanks that operate within the County Borough, and arrangements are now in place to apply for this grant funding with the aim of supporting them over the coming months.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 Currently, there are no direct financial implications upon the Council's revenue budget in respect of our preparations for Brexit. However, if there is a No Deal Brexit, the Government Yellow Hammer report indicates that the costs of supplies and services are likely to rise, which in turn will have a negative impact on the Council's budget. Clearly, until any decisions are taken, we are uncertain as to the extent of this budget pressure.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no legal or legislative implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

9. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

9.1 The work undertaken to prepare for when the UK leaves the EU helps the Council to ensure that services delivered to our vulnerable citizens are as well prepared as we can possibly plan for. It also supports the Wellbeing Goals of ensuring a resilient Wales that has cohesive communities.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The uncertainties of when and in what form the UK leaves the EU do not enable our planning arrangements to be as fully informed as we would like. However,



the work that is taking place aims to assist the Council in preparing for the UK leaving the EU as best as it possibly can do.

- 10.2 The Council has reviewed its website with the aim of providing links to guidance that is available from the UK Government, and the Welsh Government. Guidance has been issued to local businesses that aims to raise awareness of what they should be doing to prepare. This is all supported by a social media campaign.
- 10.3 The work that has taken place to raise awareness of the EUSS process, along with the co-ordinated approach to monitoring potential underlying unrest aims to ensure the safety, and continued residence of our EU citizens.
- 10.4 Contingency plans are in place for our key frontline services. These aim to soften any impacts of short-term disruption to services. It is not possible to plan with certainty for potential longer term impacts, whatever they may be.
- 10.5 The Council's 'Preparing for Brexit' delivery plan, is reviewed and updated regularly.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

as amended by

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24th OCTOBER 2019

Report of the Chief Executive

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Preparing for a No Deal Brexit

BREXIT

A chithau'n fusnes lleol gwerthfawr, mae'r Cyngor yn awyddus i sicrhau eich bod chi'n effro i'r hyn sydd angen i chi ei wneud er mwyn cynllunio ar gyfer Brexit. Mae'r canllaw byr yma yn nodi rhai meysydd allweddol rydyn ni'n eich annog chi i'w hadolygu.

Asesu pa mor barod ydych chi am Brexit:

Mae Busnes Cymru wedi creu gwefan ar gyfer helpu busnesau i baratoi ar gyfer Brexit. Beth bynnag yw maint neu raddfa eich busnes, mae'n werth edrych ar y wefan a chwblhau'r 'Pecyn Cymorth Brexit'.

Mae'r Pecyn yn canolbwyntio ar feysydd busnes allweddol - mae'n bosibl bydd rhai, os nad pob un o'r meysydd yma, yn berthnasol i chi. Wedi i chi gwblhau'r Pecyn, byddwch chi'n derbyn adroddiad a set o gamau gweithredu ynghyd ag arweiniad am sut i fynd i'r afael â'r camau sydd wedi'i nodi.

Hyd yn oed os ydych chi'n credu na fydd Brexit yn effeithio amoch chi, mae'r Cyngor yn eich annog chi i gwblhau'r Pecyn.

Yn ogystal â'r Pecyn, mae gwefan Busnes Cymru hefyd yn cynnwys llawer o wybodaeth a allai fod o ddefnydd i chi, gan gynnwys canllawiau ategol a manylion cyswllt.

Mae modd mynd ar BORTH Brexit drwy'r ddolen yma: businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/cy

Mae modd mynd i BECYN Cymorth Brexit drwy'r ddolen yma: businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/cy/pecyn-cymorth-ar-brexit

Statws Preswilydd Sefydlog yr UE

Os nad ydych chi wedi gwneud yn barod, rhaid i chi gynnal archwiliad o'ch gweithle er mwyn nodi os oes angen i unigolion wneud cais ar gyfer proses Statws Preswilydd Sefydlog yr UE.

Dyma ddolenni sydd â rhagor o wybodaeth am hynny: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CY/Council>

www.eusswales.com (Saesneg)
www.eusswales.com/cy/ (Cymraeg))

www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus

www.gov.uk/staying-uk-eu-citizen

The Council is keen to ensure that you, as a valued local business, is aware of what you need to do to plan for Brexit. This brief guidance note provides you with some key areas that we encourage you to review.

Assessing your preparedness for Brexit:

Business Wales has developed a website that is dedicated to helping business to prepare for Brexit. No matter the size and scale of your business, it's worth taking a look at the website and completing the 'Brexit Toolkit'.

The Toolkit focuses on key areas of business, some may not be relevant to you but others, if not, all will be. At the end of completing the Toolkit you'll receive a report, with a set of actions accompanied by guidance in terms of how to address the actions identified.

Even if you think you'll not be affected by Brexit, the Council encourages you to complete the Toolkit.

In addition to the Toolkit, the Business Wales website also holds a lot of information that you may find useful in terms of supporting guidance and contact details.

The Brexit PORTAL can be accessed using this link: businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/

The Brexit TOOLKIT can be accessed using this link: businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/brexit-toolkit

EU Settled Status

If you haven't already done so, you'll also need to review your workforce to identify whether any individuals need apply for the EU Settled Status process.

For more information the following links may help:

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Brexit/PreparingforBrexit/PreparingforBrexit.aspx

www.eusswales.com (English)
www.eusswales.com/cy/ (Welsh)

www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus

www.gov.uk/staying-uk-eu-citizen



BREXIT

Beth mae'r Cyngor yn ei wneud i baratoi at adael Undeb Ewrop (Brexit)?

Mae gwasanaethau allweddol y Cyngor yn cael eu hadolygu fel bydd modd rhoi cynlluniau wrth gefn ar waith i sicrhau bod cyn lleied o darfu ag y bo modd ar ddarpariaeth gwasanaethau, cyn belled ag y gallwn ni gynllunio ar ei gyfer.

Yn ystod y cyfnod sy'n arwain at y dyddiad y mae disgwyl i'r DU adael yr UE, bydd preswylwyr a busnesau lleol yn derbyn gwybodaeth allweddol mewn perthynas â Brexit.

Mae ein gwefan yn cynnwys canllawiau defnyddiol ar y meysydd allweddol canlynol:

- **Busnesau**
- **Dinasyddion yr UE sy'n byw yn RhCT a / neu'n gweithio i'r Cyngor**
- **Sefydliadau'r trydydd sector**
- **Data personol**

Mae mwy o fanylion ar gyfer pob un o'r adrannau uchod ar wefan y Cyngor.

Fel gweithwyr gwerthfawr, gwnewch yn siŵr eich bod yn edrych ar adran Brexit ein gwefan. Nid yn unig bydd yn rhoi cymorth i chi, ond gall hefyd gynorthwyo i gyfeirio ein cwsmeriaid, eich teulu a'ch ffrindiau at y canllawiau defnyddiol hyn hefyd.

Canllawiau gan Lywodraeth San Steffan, a Llywodraeth Cymru:

Mae gan Lywodraeth San Steffan wefan benodol, ac mae modd ei chyrru gan ddefnyddio'r ddolen hon: www.gov.uk/brexit#business

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi datblygu gwefan sy'n darparu ystod eang o wybodaeth am faterion ymwmneud â Brexit. Mae modd cyrru'r wefan gan ddefnyddio'r ddolen ganlynol: www.llyw.cymru/paratoi-cymru

What is the Council doing to prepare for Brexit?

Key council services are being reviewed so that contingency plans can be put in place to ensure that disruption to service provision is minimised, as far as we can possibly plan for.

During the period leading up to the date that the UK is scheduled to leave the EU, residents and local businesses will receive key information in respect of Brexit.

Our website contains useful guidance on the following key areas:

- **Businesses**
- **EU citizens that live in RCT and/or work for the Council**
- **Third sector organisations**
- **Personal data**

More detail for each of the sections listed above is provided on the Council's website.

As valued employees, please ensure that you take a look at the Brexit section of our website. It may not only provide assistance to you, but may also assist to sign-post our customers, your family and friends in the direction of this helpful guidance too.

UK & Welsh Government Guidance

The UK Government has a dedicated website, and can be accessed using this link: www.gov.uk/brexit#business

The Welsh Government has developed a website which provides a wide range of information on Brexit-related issues. The website can be accessed using the following link: www.gov.wales/preparing-wales

