

OUR BREXIT POSITION STATEMENT
EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Following the 2016 referendum result and decision to exit the European Union, East Hampshire District Council's focus has been to ensure we are prepared so we can continue to deliver high quality services. Work has also been taking place to ensure that businesses and residents are supported and aware of any potential implications of leaving the European Union.

Immediately following the result in 2016 the council assessed the potential risks of leaving the European Union. A dedicated risk register was established which covered both short term and long terms risks. Risks identified included economic, social, political and legislative and included mitigation actions which the council has been continuously tracking.

In early 2019 as the date of Brexit approached a 'Brexit Team' was established utilising existing Council resources. The 'Brexit Team' has met frequently and has a nominated lead council officer, our Director of Regeneration & Place who is the point of contact with central Government for all Brexit related communications.

Central Government has provided advice on how to prepare for Brexit including a checklist of items to review. The checklist includes the following: statutory & regulatory services for which the council is responsible, border areas, supply chain, data handling, local partnership working and communications. In addition, the Government has recently been holding monthly calls for local authorities with updates from the Department of Transport, Department of Health and Home Office, the last call being held recently on 23rd September 2019. Further to this there are nine regional Brexit leads from across the country to feed in and receive information with weekly updates provided from central Government.

Throughout the period the council has been engaged with its partners across the south east, in particular the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which has been coordinating Brexit preparations for the region in line with national planning assumptions and its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. The LRF coordinates emergency plans and procedures for major incidents across the area. Through the LRF, organisations work together to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. There is a dedicated sub-group of the LRF working on Brexit of which East Hampshire District Council are involved through our Emergency Planning Team. The LRF has led on responding to any traffic issues as a result of no-deal. Traffic problems could include road congestion (impacted as a result of our proximity to Portsmouth Port) or fuel shortages. The LRF has completed work on traffic modelling, in liaison with Department for Transport, to understand potential impacts on the road network. One area that may be impacted is the potential use of the A31 as a holding area for upto 300 HGVs if Portsmouth Port becomes congested. Hampshire County Council completed initial engineering works in March 2019 to prepare the A31 to be used as an HGV holding area with local residents kept informed of the plan. Further to this there is the potential that the A3, M275 and M27 become congested leading to traffic issues in our area.

The council has its own business continuity plans in place to ensure council services are still provided in the event of no-deal Brexit. Business continuity planning has involved an exercise in understanding which staff can get into work (those who live locally and can walk) and which staff can not get to the council offices in the event of road congestion or fuel shortages.

Our external work is focussed on supporting local businesses and residents. We have recently conducted a survey with local businesses to understand how prepared they are for Brexit, in particular no-deal Brexit. We are reviewing the survey information and this will help us inform what further work we can look at doing to support local businesses. Local businesses also have access to assistance from Solent LEP/Enterprise M3 LEP. Our website has recently been updated with further information and links to the 'Get Ready for Brexit' Government webpages. These webpages contain the necessary information for what businesses and residents need to do to be prepared for a no-deal Brexit.

To date funding from central Government has totalled £35,000 for East Hampshire District Council over two financial years. In the event of a no-deal further resources would be required due to the potential implications both short term and long term. The funding supplied to date has been spent ensuring that council services will continue in the event of a no-deal.

The council is committed to ensuring that services are maintained and that residents and businesses in our area are fully supported.