

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Subject: Brexit Preparations Update Report

Report of: Sir Richard Leese, Portfolio Lead for Business and Economy and Jim Taylor, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Business and Economy

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To provide an update on the preparations underway across Greater Manchester for Brexit, and considering possible mitigating actions to minimise the impact should the UK exit the EU without a deal.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members note the update on Brexit preparatory work underway across Greater Manchester.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The UK is due to leave the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> October. While both Conservative leadership candidates have stated they want the UK to leave the EU with a deal - agreed by UK parliament – both have also said they would leave without a deal if necessary.
- 1.2 The extension to the exit date has resulted in a reduction in the range of national activities and engagement with Government in terms of preparations, and especially in terms of a potential no deal exit. Preparatory work is however ongoing, and is anticipated to increase in pace and scale following the conclusion of the Conservative leadership contest and as we near Brexit day.

## 2. GM Brexit Preparedness

2.1 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.

2.2 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. A register of major infrastructure projects (over £10m) across GM is being compiled; along with an assessment of the risks potentially posed to their delivery.
- **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. RECOMMENDATION:

- 3.1 That Members note the update on Brexit preparatory work underway across Greater Manchester.

