

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 21 November 2018

Subject: Update on local preparations for a “No deal” Brexit

Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Author: Stuart Brewer (Corporate Risk and Resilience)

For: Decision

1. Purpose

To inform Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) of the current position regarding the local and in-Service planning for a “no deal” Brexit.

2. Recommendations

CGC is recommended to:

- a) Note the local multi-agency and Service preparations for a “no deal” Brexit.
- b) Consider if there is need to inform the full Combined Fire Authority.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. In September 2018 instruction was given by Central Government via the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to begin work on planning for a “no deal” Brexit. This was to be done by individual agencies as well as on a multi-agency level.
- 3.2. A local multi-agency planning group has met and produced a basic risk assessment as well as tasking each individual partner agency to produce its own impact assessment.
- 3.3. The LRF risk assessment has highlighted a number of areas where preparation may be required. Internal assessment has identified a number of areas for closer consideration.
- 3.4. The Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Tactical Management Team (TMT) was tasked with the identification, assessment and mitigation of potential risk to the Service.

4. Background

LRF Planning

- 4.1. On 27th September the LRF held a Brexit workshop to identify, discuss and risk assess possible impacts arising from a “no deal” Brexit scenario. This was in response to a national instruction to begin such work.
- 4.2. The meeting identified the following possible “Key Risks” which, in order of risk were:
- East Midlands Airport (EMA) freight disruption
 - Impact on local health services
 - Transport network disruption – road (within a 5 mile radius around EMA)
 - Business continuity for local businesses
 - Community cohesion
 - Influx of British nationals from overseas
 - Transport disruption – rail
 - EMA passenger disruption
 - Public disorder/concern
 - Transport network disruption – road (beyond a 5 mile radius of EMA)
- 4.3. Other possible risks discussed included:
- Disruption to food and fuel supplies
 - Disruption to power supplies
 - LRF partner agency business continuity
 - Loss of access to shared European ICT systems
 - Loss of staff
 - Concurrent incidents (including severe weather scenarios)
- 4.4. The LRF group felt that their task was made more difficult by the lack of clear guidance as to what a “no deal” Brexit would look like, or the ability to assess the likelihood of it happening. It should also be noted that the risk assessment undertaken was ad-hoc and not subject to the usual rigour applied to the Community Risk Register or our own internal risk registers.

LRF – Future Actions to be taken

- 4.5. The LRF has scheduled two further meetings:
- A meeting of the Risk Assessment Working Group to review the Community Risk Register and identify which risk assessments, if any, may be subject to change as a result of the “no deal” Brexit scenario. This is scheduled for 12th November 2018 and is to be chaired by the Service’s Corporate Risk and Resilience Manager; and

A further meeting of the LRF Brexit Planning Group on 13th November 2018.

- 4.6. Leicestershire Police and Leicester City Council have agreed to take the lead in the development of a media plan.
- 4.7. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) has agreed to check with Central Government if any sites in Leicestershire are identified as potential freight storage areas. These may be needed to relieve congestion around EMA dependent on customs arrangements. The LRF Group asked RED to seek guidance on possible additional funding burdens on local responders and if any assistance is likely to be made available to meet them.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service – Preparations and risk assessments

- 4.8. TMT has been tasked to give consideration to areas of Service work that may be impacted upon. The half term holidays has delayed some responses. Full details of responses received so far can be found in the Appendix.
- 4.9. Some potential risks have been identified, although as yet they have not been formally risk assessed; they are considered of note because:
 - They appear in both the LRF and Service assessments and/or
 - They have been raised as a possible concern by more than one member of TMT or highlighted as a specific concern in the returns.

4.10. The key potential risks identified were:

i. Finance:

- Fluctuation in the exchange rate of the Euro and US Dollar against the Pound resulting in increased project costs.
- Reduction in funding received from local business rates (due to fewer businesses operating) negatively impacting on day to day funding and reducing capability and willingness to commit to future capital expenditure.

ii. EU Contracts:

Unknown impact on the command and control mobilising system used in Fire Control. This is provided by a company based in France (Systel) which may be affected by possible EU contractual and funding issues.

iii. Response:

- Possible impact on response times around East Midlands Airport.
- Potential for social disorder/civil unrest resulting in crews having to respond.

Ongoing action

4.11. The Service is to continue its active participation in the LRF Brexit Planning programme.

4.12. TMT will complete the Brexit assessment and where appropriate undertake risk assessments. LFRS Senior Management Team will consider the details of this in November.

Issues of Note

4.13. There has been little guidance from Central Government as to what they expect a “no deal” Brexit to look like, or the potential impact it may have.

4.14. Where guidance has been provided it has been on a limited and strictly controlled basis. Much of what is available has come from the public “Technical Notices.”

4.15. All local and LRF planning is being undertaken on a non-political basis.

5. Report Implications / Impact

5.1 Legal (including crime and disorder)

A failure to plan may result in the inability to meet relevant legislative and statutory requirements.

5.2 Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

Planning and assessing the impact of a “no deal” Brexit allows us to identify potential financial burdens which may impact on our Medium Term Financial Plan.

5.3 Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

Failure to adequately prepare for the potential outcome of a “no deal” Brexit may adversely impact on the ability of the Service to meet its core strategies as contained in Our Plan.

There is a risk to the reputation of the Service should planning be seen as inadequate or excessive.

5.4 Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

The impact on staff, service users and stakeholders cannot be fully assessed until an in-depth risk assessment has been undertaken.

5.5 Environmental

There are currently no environmental issues identified as a result of a “no deal” Brexit.

5.6 Impact upon Our Plan Objectives

The implications of a “no deal” Brexit are not fully known. There is a potential that there could be an impact on our ability to deliver all of our objectives simply as a result of changes to the exchange rate.

6. Background Papers

None.

7. Appendices

Appendix – Items of Potential Note Raised by Members of the TMT.

8. Officers to contact

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