

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 28 October 2019

Councillor Huw Thomas,
Leader,
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Councillor Thomas,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 16 October 2019

As Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, thank you for attending Committee and briefing Members on the Council's preparations for Brexit. The Committee has asked me to pass on its appreciation to yourself, the Chief Executive and officer team for supporting this scrutiny, and to offer the following comments and observations.

The Committee considers that the Council has clearly prepared for Brexit. We recognise that the risk register contains challenging risk information and that some things will emerge which were not anticipated. We also note your summary that Brexit presents some opportunities that are outweighed by the risks.

We note that a communication plan is in place via the Local Resilience Forum and that *alert* rather than *alarm* will be the communications approach. We endorse the alignment of the communications narrative of PSB partners. However, we wish to highlight that the timing of providing information to people is critical if we are to encourage Cardiff consumers to respond appropriately and avoid bulk purchasing for example.

The Committee notes your difficulty in taking a long term view of the impact Brexit will have on the labour market, particularly your view that in the longer term the Council may be vulnerable in terms of sustaining some services.

The Members were reassured that there is an extensive Brexit emergency plan in place, and that the gold and silver emergency planning rota will continue for as long

as is needed. We note that officers are providing this cover in addition to the day job and that no additional resources have been allocated to the service. We note also that without additional resources sustaining command and control will be difficult.

The Committee has some concerns about the budgetary impact of Brexit on the Council, and indeed how much has been spent in preparing for Brexit. We note that, whilst Welsh Government has provided funding for a Brexit Co-ordinator, Council preparations to date have been executed within existing resources. We note also that you plan to carry out an exercise post-Brexit to evaluate the preparation costs and will be interested to hear the outcome in due course.

Members note that you have had 30,000 applications to the EU Settlement Scheme to date, and are currently receiving approximately 10,000 applications monthly. We wish to commend the community cohesion team on their involvement of the third sector in a co-ordinated approach to spreading the message on applying for EU settlement.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, my sincere thanks for attending the PRAP Scrutiny Committee to update us on Brexit preparations. We consider that the Council is well placed and will not expect a response to our letter.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships
Gavin Macho, Principal Emergency Planner
Sian Sanders, Operational Manager, Cohesion and Community Engagement
Debbie Said, Cabinet Support Officer
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager