

**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



14th February, 2019

MEETING OF BREXIT COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Thursday, 14th February, 2019 at 4.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
 - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Presentations**
 - (a) Youth Panel
3. **Correspondence Received - The Executive Office, David Sterling** (Pages 1 - 8)
4. **EU Settlement Scheme Information Day - Update** (Pages 9 - 12)
5. **Delegation to Brussels - Update** (Pages 13 - 16)
6. **Update on Day 1 Preparedness** (Pages 17 - 20)

7. **Update on Brexit Scenario Planning Workshop** (Verbal Update)
8. **Update on FSB Report - 'Making Northern Ireland an Enhanced Economic Zone'** (Pages 21 - 24)



Subject:	Correspondence Received from Mr David Sterling– EU Settlement Scheme
Date:	14th February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer
Contact Officer:	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	To bring to Members' attention, a letter received from Mr. David Sterling, Head of the Civil Service with regard to the EU Settlement Scheme.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to consider the correspondence from Mr. David Sterling.

3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members of the Brexit Committee will be aware that at its meeting on 6th December 2018, it was agreed that the Committee would write to Mr. David Sterling to consider the provision of an advice service to support EU citizens and their families who are resident in Northern Ireland with making EU Settlement Scheme applications.</p> <p>Following ratification at the meeting of Council on 7th January 2019, a letter dated 9th January (Appendix 1) was subsequently sent to Mr Sterling.</p> <p>A letter dated 1st February (Appendix 2) was received by email from Mr Sterling in response to the aforementioned correspondence.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There no financial implications relating to this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1: Letter dated 9th January 2019 to Mr. David Sterling, Head of the Civil Service.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Letter dated 1st February 2019 from Mr David Sterling.</p>

Legal and Civic Services

Democratic Services Section



Date: 9th January 2019

Being dealt with by:
Ext:

Miss C. Donnelly
3494

Mr David Sterling
Head of the Civil Service
The Executive Office
SD03 Stormont Castle
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3TT

Dear Mr Sterling

Re: Brexit – EU Settlement Scheme

The Brexit Committee of Belfast City Council, at its meeting of 6th December 2018, received a report to update Members on the EU Settlement Scheme to allow EU citizens and their families to continue to live and work in the UK after 31st December 2020.

This includes all EU citizens who arrive in the UK before 31st December 2020. EU citizens will need to get 'settled' or 'pre-settled' status to continue to live and work in the UK after December 2020.

People with a 'settled' or 'pre-settled' status can live in the UK and:

- work in the UK
- use the NHS
- enrol in education or continue studying
- access public funds such as benefits and pensions, if eligible for them
- bring family members to the UK after 31st December 2020
- travel in and out of the UK

At a meeting of Belfast City Council Brexit Committee held on 6th December 2018, it was agreed that the Committee would write to you to consider the provision of an advice service to support EU citizens and their families who are resident in Northern Ireland with making EU Settlement Scheme applications.

Members would therefore request that clarification on the provision and funding position for an advice service with regard to the EU Settlement Scheme be provided as soon as possible to ensure that the Council can impart details to its concerned citizens.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CD'.

Carolyn Donnelly
Democratic Services Officer

Democratic Services Section
Belfast City Council, Legal and Civic Services
City Hall, BELFAST BT1 5GS
Tel: 028 9032 0202 Textphone: 028 9027 0405 Fax: 028 9050 2999
Email: donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk

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David Sterling
Head of the Civil Service
Room FD.34, Stormont Castle
Stormont Estate, Belfast
BT4 3TT, Northern Ireland
Tel: 028 9037 8133
E-mail: hocs@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

By email
donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk

Our ref: COR0006/2019

1 February 2019

Dear Carolyn

Brexit – EU Settlement Scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 9 January 2019 on the above matter.

While Immigration is an Excepted Matter it is vital that the implementation of the Scheme in NI is facilitated to ensure that the geographical and logistical issues here are duly recognised. It is a priority, given the profound contribution that EU nationals make to our economy and society, to ensure that they are given every opportunity to apply for the Scheme and have at least the same access arrangements as is provided to those in the rest of the UK.

Currently in Northern Ireland, 'Generalist Advice Services' are available at approximately 60 advice centre locations across NI. This is a free, independent advice service, on issues including benefits, housing issues, immigration, health issues and Brexit. The Advice Sector has been identified as a priority one area for

Brexit day 1 delivery plans and additional funding has been requested to up skill the Advice Sector and to deal with the increased demand for services.

As you will be aware the EU Settlement Scheme is a Home Office (HO) initiative. The Home Office has developed a Safeguarding Strategy to ensure that the Scheme is accessible for vulnerable EU nationals. Both TEO and NILGA are members of the 'Safeguarding Standing Group', established by the Home Office to inform the development and implementation of its Safeguarding Strategy.

In support of this strategy, the Home Office plans on implementing a range of support mechanisms in Northern Ireland to support vulnerable EU citizens in making their application. These include:

- Grant Scheme – open to applications from community groups who are willing to provide support to applicants to the Scheme;
- Digital Assistance – IT assistance provided to those who experience difficulties completing the on-line application; and
- Chip Checker Locations – venues where applicants can access a device to verify their identity without having to physically send off their passports.

My officials are continuing to work with the Home Office to inform their implementation of the strategy and its various support mechanisms in NI. I am happy to share details with you as and when, any further detail is available.

In the interim, the HO has published toolkits for Local Authorities, Employers and Voluntary Groups, which you may find useful in informing concerned citizens.

Toolkits can be accessed at the following link - <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/eu-settlement-scheme>.

I hope this provides you with some clarification around the implementation of the Scheme in NI. I will ensure that my officials keep you updated as developments arise in respect of specific engagement and outreach in NI.

Yours sincerely



DAVID STERLING
Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service

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Subject:	Update on the EU Settlement Scheme
Date:	14 February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kim Walsh, Business, Research & Development Manager, City & Neighbourhood Services.

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the EU Settlement Scheme.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note the update provided.

3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that a report was brought to the January meeting of this Committee outlining plans for an information session on the EU Settlement Scheme in City Hall. It was agreed that local organisations who successfully obtain funding from the Home Office funding scheme to allow them to support EU citizens to apply to the Scheme, be invited to provide the information at the session. It had also been proposed that the information session be held in late February/early March.</p> <p>We are aware that a local consortium has applied for funding from the Home Office Fund but a decision has not yet been made on their application. However it has emerged that if they do receive funding it must be spent in the financial year 19/20.</p> <p>The scheme is currently open to some EU citizens and their family members and will open fully by 30 March 2019. The current advice from the Home Office is that the deadline for applying will be 30 June 2021, or 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. The Home Office's website also advises 'You can apply now if you're eligible, but you'll probably get pre-settled status rather than settled status if you do not currently have 5 years' 'continuous residence'.</p> <p>It was announced on 21 January 2019 that there will be no fee when the scheme opens fully. Anyone who has applied already, or who applies and pays a fee during the test phases, will have their fee refunded and details of the refunds process will be published shortly.</p> <p>Members are advised that the next meeting of Migrant Forum has been scheduled for 4th March and that an update on the EU Settlement Scheme is on the agenda for this meeting. Through the Migrant Forum officers will liaise with the Executive Office and where appropriate we will work with them in disseminating information around the EU Settlement Scheme</p> <p>Given these circumstances it is suggested that the Information Session is moved to April and that we use the meeting of the Migrant Forum in March to get their views on the format the information session should take, and what channels we should use to promote the session to ensure that all relevant groups are aware of it.</p>

	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>To deliver the Information Session will require the use of the City Hall for one day and a small budget to cover tea and coffee which will come out of existing resources.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	Appendices
	None

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Subject:	Update on Brussels visit
Date:	14 February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer, City & Neighbourhood Services.

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to provide a summary update to Members on the recent visit to Brussels.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note the update provided.

3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that, it was agreed that an all-Party delegation from the Council undertake a visit to Brussels to engage with EU officials to represent the views of the Council in relation to Special Designated Status, remaining in the single market and the Council's position on the Backstop, and to engage with EU funding bodies about our future participation in EU funding programmes.</p>
	<p>The visit took place on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th January and the delegation consisted of the Lord Mayor, Councillors Walsh and Lyons and two officers.</p> <p>Over the course of the visits the delegation met with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Elliot, Head of Office, NI Executive Office in Brussels • Nina Obermaier, Adviser to Taskforce 50 • Hermione Gough, Director for UK-EU Partnership at the UK's Permanent Representation to the European Union • Mr. Dieter Cavalleri Minister in charge of Parliamentary Affairs and Brexit at the Mission of Switzerland to the EU • Micheal Ó Conchuir, Secretary General European Alliance Group - European Committee of the Regions • David Brück & Amal Kaoua Deputy Directors Brexit Unit, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU • The 3 Northern Ireland MEPs - Diane Dodds MEP, Martina Anderson MEP and Jim Nicholson MEP • Mairead McGuinness MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament and an Irish MEP from Midlands-North-West Constituency • Matt Carthy MEP, Irish MEP from Midlands-North-West Constituency • Gabriele Zimmer MEP who sits on the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group <p>A meeting had been arranged with Elmar Brok MEP who also sits on the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group but unfortunately this had to be cancelled on the Wednesday due his attendance at an unscheduled plenary session. We also had requests to meet with Luke "Ming" Flanagan MEP and Marian Harkin MEP, the 2 remaining Irish</p>

	MEPs from the Midlands-North-West Constituency but unfortunately were unable to facilitate these within our schedule.
	<p>A key theme within all the discussions was that it was important that views from all the different perspectives in Belfast and the wider region were presented in Brussels and that ongoing engagement would be welcomed. Key points to come out from the various meetings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross border bodies will continue to operate and even under a 'no deal' scenario, Peace and Interreg funding has been agreed to the end of 2020 • A case will have to be made in relation to accessing future EU funding programmes and this is likely to be based on what is available for 3rd party countries – there are current examples of non-EU countries accessing funding programmes but this will be subject to UK government's agreement to make the relevant levels of financial contributions to the relevant programmes • Whilst there is a desire for an orderly exit and the avoidance of a 'no deal' scenario, 'no deal' planning needs to be taking place – and has increased over recent weeks • Visits are important as they help inform both officials and MEPs in Brussels of what is happening on the ground – there was positive feedback about previous engagement with a range of political representatives and civic society in NI • Switzerland's relationship with the EU has been ongoing for 40 years and is constantly evolving – although Switzerland was obviously never a member of the EU to begin with. <p>Several requests were made for further information on Belfast City Council's position in relation to Brexit and a copy of the agreed Council motions have been forwarded to these individuals.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>A budget of up to £9,000 was approved by the SP&R Committee to enable the visit to take place, which would be covered from the existing Place and Economy departmental budget.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	Appendices
	None

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Subject:	Update on Brexit Day 1 preparedness
Date:	14 th February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kim Walsh, Business, Research & Development Manager, City & Neighbourhood Services.

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to outline for Members work that is currently being undertaken in relation to the Council's Brexit Day 1 preparedness.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note this update.
3.0	Main report

	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that that the Committee was updated in November 2018 on the work that officers have recently undertaken in relational to identifying potential Day 1 service implications in relation to Brexit. An internal audit was undertaken and this identified that there are several key areas within Council where there may be a potential impact in the event of a no deal Brexit. These areas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR; • finance/funding; • procurement; • waste; • port health; • product safety; • communications; and • business continuity management. <p>Further work is currently ongoing to define potential day 1 impacts, risks and possible mitigations and a business continuity approach is being taken to addressing potential Day 1 impacts. A cross departmental meeting was recently held with representatives from key services to identify key actions for moving forward. Members are asked to note that following on from this meeting the following actions are being undertaken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That Council's critical services are completing Brexit Resilience Measures template to identify the potential impact that Brexit may have on service delivery over the 8-week period from 19 March to 10 May and the necessary resilience measures that need to be taken before 29 March. 2) That the responsible officers review and update their Business Continuity Plan ensuring that it deals with service delivery post Brexit, and communicates it to staff before 29 March. <p>Members should also note that from 19 March emergency planning staff will provide situational reporting and daily position statements to the Council's senior management team on critical services. Arrangements exist across Northern Ireland to respond to emergencies and ensure that the support provided to the public is co-ordinated. In Belfast the agencies use the Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group to undertake planning to enable this response.</p>

Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group members will meet before and after EU Exit to ensure all agencies can raise concerns if these arise. Normal emergency planning arrangements will be available to respond to emergencies if required. This may be as a result of a civil contingencies issue such as severe weather or if there is an EU Exit related issue which could cause a threat to life situation to arise or significant cumulative impacts have occurred which necessitate a locally co-ordinated response. The Emergency Co-ordination Centre in City Hall will be on standby to activate if required. Refresher training for staff who may be asked to work in the centre has commenced. The Council will establish an internal information hub from 19 March 2019 to maintain shared situational awareness across all departments/functions. This will include any potential business continuity issues, concerns which need escalated to central government or rising tide issues which could lead to an emergency activation being required.

Work has also been ongoing in several areas around preparations for Brexit including liaising with central government departments and working on civil contingency planning with other relevant partners. Central government departments are developing plans to prevent and mitigate any potential impacts of EU Exit. The Executive Office is leading this work across the NI Civil Service and is establishing co-ordination arrangements to ensure that any potential issues can be identified and addressed as quickly as possible. These arrangements will be established prior to EU Exit and continue until required but will be scaled up/down as needed. Co-ordination arrangements will still be required if there is a deal but at a reduced scale. Belfast City Council works with a wide range of departments to deliver normal services. The Council will link with the central government co-ordination arrangements to discuss and escalate any issues which arise in relation to EU Exit.

A further report updating Members on the preparations being made in relation to Day 1 preparedness will be brought to the Committee in March.

Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial implications relating to this report but the work that is being undertaken to further define potential day 1 impacts, risks and mitigations may have financial and resource implications and these will be reported to Members as required. It is likely that there will be direct costs associated with preparing for Brexit e.g. in relation to civil contingency planning, and where possible these will be claimed back from central government.

	<p>Members should note that the Council has not included an increase in its recurrent budgets because of the uncertainty, however, if one-off costs are to be incurred these will be financed through Council's general reserves</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	Appendices
	None.



Subject:	Federation of Small Businesses – ‘Making Northern Ireland an Enhanced Economic Zone’ proposal
Date:	14 February 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To make the Committee aware of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) proposal for Northern Ireland to be designated as an ‘enhanced economic zone’ in response to the ongoing Brexit negotiations.
1.2	This publication was prepared in October 2018 by the FSB NI, as part of their efforts to explore options in response to the Brexit process and to present an alternative scenario for the region.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to note the content of the report - to consider inviting a representative from Federation of Small Businesses to a future Committee meeting
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) represents the small and medium sized enterprises (SME) that tends to dominate the Belfast and regional private sector. Belfast has 10,560 VAT registered businesses (14% of the regional total). Almost one fifth of these businesses are micro and small businesses, employing less than 50 employees.</p>
3.2	<p>During 2018, the FSB, working with Ulster University, held several focus groups in the region to provide a forum for business owners to express their views on Brexit. The key messages from the focus groups were in terms of a desire to minimise disruption and to take account of the region's unique position to identify opportunities for the future.</p>
3.3	<p>Following this feedback, the FSB have produced a proposal that explores a future role for NI as an 'enhanced economic zone'. This proposal is designed to enable tariff-free trade between both the UK and EU markets after Brexit; providing access to the UK market for Ireland and the rest of the EU and vice versa and regulatory assurance for goods entering the EU through NI.</p>
3.4	<p>The report acknowledges that it does not address all the challenges posed by Brexit and that compromises will be needed but it offers a pragmatic solution from the business community for consideration. A copy of the report is available on the FSB website at: FSB proposal</p>
3.5	<p>The proposals are dependent on a number of assumptions. This includes a Withdrawal Agreement being in place that would include reference to the designation of NI as an Enhanced Economic Zone; that the UK/EU trade continues as-is at least until the end of the transition period in 2020; and the likely extension of the transition period to facilitate agreement on the future relationship.</p>

3.6	The paper outlines a high level bespoke model for the region, examining the potential of NI to become an Enhanced Economic Zone post Brexit. Council officers have made contact with FSB for further detail. It is suggested that the Committee may wish to hear directly from FSB to further explore the proposal and specific considerations for Belfast.
3.7	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no financial or resource implications attached to this report.
3.8	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality, good relations or rural needs issues attached to this report.
4.0	Appendices
	None.

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