

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
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Item No. 10

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** PREPARATIONS FOR A 'NO DEAL' BREXIT

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Background Papers: None

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Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		

*Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.*

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## **PURPOSE:**

To advise Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) on the work Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) have been undertaking in preparation for a 'no deal' Brexit, both internally and working with the multi-agency partners of the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF).

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to minimise the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit as well as raising any further issues of concern of which they have become aware through their work in other areas.

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### 1. Background

- 1.1. In September 2018 instruction was given by Central Government via the BLRF 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.
- 1.2. As a Category 1 responder, under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), BFRS has a duty to work in collaboration with other Category 1 responders to support the Bedfordshire's response to, and recovery from, potential incidents.

### 2. Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum Planning

- 2.1. The Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF) has engaged with key local partners to discuss the potential impact of the UK's exit from the EU and assess the risks relevant to Bedfordshire. BFRS representatives have participated in a number of national seminars and tele-conferences.
- 2.2. A multi-agency EU Exit scenario-based workshop, facilitated by the Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was held on 20 December 2018, exploring the issues and impacts of Brexit covering three phases:
  - 4 weeks before exit;
  - 2 days after exit; and
  - 8 weeks after exit.

- 2.3. The outcomes from this workshop have influenced the development of a number of identified Reasonable Worse Case Scenario (RWCS) planning assumptions considered applicable to the Bedfordshire area and covering the following areas:
- Travel, Freight & Borders;
  - Disruption of Services & Supply Chains;
  - Information & Data Sharing; and
  - Demonstrations and Disorder.
- 2.4. In the lead up to and beyond the 29 March (the date scheduled for the UK to leave the EU), the BLRF has activated its command and control arrangements and has established a rolling programme of Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups (SCG and TCG, respectively) with the first SCG meeting held at BFRS Headquarters on 7 January.
3. BFRS Business Continuity Planning
- 3.1. Internally, members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have been reviewing their Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans through the lens of a 'no deal' Brexit and a specific risk has been established on the Corporate Risk Register to help co-ordinate the review and mitigation of the potential impacts.
- 3.2. The work undertaken internally takes account of the BLRF planning assumptions and guidance received from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) that has a nominated national lead to co-ordinate the Brexit planning and preparations across the sector.
- 3.3. The NFCC guidance emerged following their participation in a Home Office led workshop on 30 October that specifically considered 3 different aspects:
- Any possible procurement or supply chain issues;
  - Potential operational impacts on the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS); and
  - Support which may be provided to assist Police Forces.

Procurement or supply chain issues:

- 3.4. The NFCCs Strategic Commercial Board (SCB) has sought to identify any potential risks to the sector following Brexit, engaging with the Fire Industries Association (FIA) who, from a practical perspective, have identified the effects of delays on EU imports of products and components as the biggest potential practical impact on the sector although they suggest normal business continuity plans should enable the sector to deal with this kind of delay.
- 3.5. A review of the BFRS and BLRF fuel business continuity plans has been undertaken to take account of border disruptions and possible customer behaviour (panic buying) causing localised issues.

Potential Operational Impacts for the FRS:

- 3.6. Increased demonstrations and a rise in public disorder could potentially impact on the FRS from an operational perspective. At present Bedfordshire Police have no intelligence that significant levels of civil disorder are likely in any Brexit scenario, nor would any evidence to the contrary typically appear until much closer to an actual event. However, BP have advised they are planning for providing mutual aid reinforcements to other parts of the UK.
- 3.7. Planning for an unknown level of threat around civil disturbances is extremely challenging and therefore some effort to try and quantify a reasonable worst-case scenario has been made. While the police intelligence does not anticipate disruption on the scale seen in the widespread civil disturbances that took place across 10 police force areas in summer 2011, those events exemplify the sort of issues which can arise during public protest.

Support for Police Services:

- 3.8. The NFCC has suggested that FRSs and police forces should consider and agree what, if any, support could be provided at a local level. The support that would be available to police forces from FRSs may differ significantly in each service depending on local arrangements, capacity and capability. BFRS already work closely with BP across a number of areas and will continue to do so. BP have not made any specific requests to increase support from BFRS.

4. Next Steps

4.1. This is a fast-moving issue and a great deal more work may be required as more information becomes available but the BLRF is well placed to receive and respond to any emerging issues. BFRS will continue to review its business continuity management plans and provide effective support and leadership to the BLRF.

5. Recommendation

5.1. The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to minimise the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit as well as raising any further issues of concern of which they have become aware through their work in other areas.

**ANDREW HOPKINSON**  
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