

Convention Item 04

**UK Exit from EU Update**

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| **Summary and Recommendations**  Previous reports summarised the work being undertaken by COSLA as we prepare for the UK’s Exit from the EU.  The UK Exit date remains set for 31 October 2019, and a “No Deal” Exit remains a possibility, albeit, at the time of writing, the way forward is in no way clear. The Scottish Government formal Resilience Room arrangements are expected to begin again imminently. COSLA’s own risk monitoring arrangements are also continuing and have been stepped up to include arrangements for ongoing dialogue with our members on issues as they arise. Given the currently volatile position, an oral update will be provided to Convention on any significant relevant developments since this report was written.  This paper invites Convention to:   1. Note the updates regarding work in progress, particularly the work to assess and bid for required funding to prepare and handle the impacts of UK Exit; and 2. Provide any comments on the details set out in this paper. |

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| **References**  Previous reports**:**   * COSLA Leaders 27 September 2019 – UK Exit from EU update * COSLA Leaders 30 August 2019 – UK Exit Update * COSLA Leaders 28 June 2019 – Brexit Update * COSLA Leaders 22 February 2019 – Brexit Update * COSLA Leaders 25 January 2019 – Brexit Update |

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**October 2019**



**UK Exit from EU - Update**

# Purpose

1. To provide Convention Members with an update on the various activities through which COSLA endeavours to influence, and prepare for the outcomes of, the UK’s Exit from the EU.

# Current COSLA Position

1. COSLA has positions on a wide range of UK Exit related matters which are well known to Leaders and remain unchanged[[1]](#footnote-1). In seeking to promote those positions and plan and mitigate, as far as is possible, for the outcomes, and also seize any opportunities that UK Exit may bring for our member councils, COSLA has secured engagement through a range of channels, including: Scottish and UK Government Ministers and departments; other UK Local Government Associations; Local Authority professional associations; and other sectors. We continue to strengthen communications with all our Members and experts in a range of fields and disciplines relevant to the UK’s Exit.
2. A meeting is planned on 8 October for the President with Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, to discuss the required consultative process to ensure any repatriated powers from the EU to the UK, and then to Scotland, are devolved to the most appropriate level.
3. The President and Vice-President have now established, as a minimum, weekly telephone calls with Aileen Campbell, and other Ministers as required, to discuss issues of shared concern as we near UK Exit at the end of October.
4. In terms of the meeting the President had with Alister Jack, the new Secretary of State for Scotland, they discussed promoting the EU Settlement Scheme On potential future UK Immigration Policy, the President set out COSLA’s previously agreed position. On the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Secretary of State indicated that, assuming UK Exit from the EU does happen on 31 October, then a consultation should be expected early in the new year. Again, the President set out the minimum that Scottish Local Government would be looking for in any new Fund, as agreed previously by Leaders.
5. Similar to the upcoming meeting with Mr Russell above, the President and Secretary of State also discussed briefly future arrangements for COSLA and other UK Local Authority Associations to provide formal opinions on developing UK legislation replacing or building on previous EU legislation, for which Mr Jack indicated support. Finally, there was discussion on the latest position on Export Health Certificates and Mr Jack agreed to facilitate a further discussion between COSLA and DEFRA to seek to find a solution at UK level. At the time of writing, this call is awaited.

# What is changing?

1. COSLA officers, with assistance from SOLACE, have put in place a range measures to ensure that Local Government is as effectively prepared, informed and coordinated as it is possible to be in the run up to the UK Exit date. Briefly, these measures are:

* Monitoring of key issues of concern to Local Government (e.g. supply issues), engaging with Local Government officers, representative bodies, Scottish and UK Governments.
* Fortnightly teleconferencing involving all 32 Council UK Exit coordinators/leads to raise, discuss, and resolve issues as they arise and ensure all councils have access to the latest information available on UK Exit.
* Attending the twice-weekly Local Government Resilience teleconferences, ensuring that those planning arrangements are aware of policy and political preparations and progress.
* Early discussions with trade unions to brief them on broad preparations, the identified risks being monitored, and how these relate to staff.
* Collating information from all councils on any cost pressures relating to UK Exit. This will be updated regularly as we go through and beyond the UK Exit date.
* Working with Environmental Health Officers to ensure increased service pressures regarding Export Health Certificates are handled as best they can, and that issues requiring to be resolved are flagged up appropriately to relevant interests.
* Preparation of business cases for: Export Health Certificates processing, and protection of vulnerable people/groups/communities post UK Exit. We are also considering whether any further business cases are required on the back of responses to the recent costs survey.
* Hosting a round-table on 24 September with Local Authorities to allow feedback on any issues they are experiencing with the EU Settlement Scheme.
* Continuing to meet with Local Authorities to promote the International Organisation for Migration/COSLA immigration caseworker resource and provide support.
* Issuing a COSLA newsletter covering various aspects of UK Exit related work undertaken by COSLA.
* Working with the Scottish Government’s Social Care Coordinator and Resilience Leads to ensure local resilience partnerships have access to experts in the sector who can advise on needs and preparations.

# Next Steps

1. The COSLA Presidential Team, Spokespersons and Officers will continue work on the UK Exit’s from the EU and provide further updates to Leaders and Boards as and when required.

**October 2019**

1. <https://www.cosla.gov.uk//about/cosla-europe/brexit/cosla-and-brexit> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)