Purpose: Provide an update on Brexit implications in relation to a range of areas.

Background: This paper is an update on earlier briefings issued to CET in January 2019 and to all Councillors, staff and partners in February 2019.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Briefings have been provided previously on the Council’s preparedness for Brexit. This short paper is the current update on the Council’s Brexit preparations. (Previous briefings: October 2018 (full Council); January 2019 (CLT); February 2019 (CLT, Elected Members and staff).

2.0 Emergency Resilience

2.1 There is no further update from the information provided in the February briefing.

3.0 EU Settlement

3.1 The Government announced on 1st April that the EU Settlement Scheme is fully open, and stressed that they are looking for reasons to grant people the status they are eligible to receive. Applying to the EU Settlement Scheme is completely free and is a simple 3-step process. This can currently be undertaken using android devices and work with Apple means that their devices will be able to support the required app by the end of the year. For those without access to a computer, or lacking the skills or confidence to use one, there will be assistance available in Assisted Digital locations across the country – including seven of our customer service centres. More information is available at GOV.UK, including guidance on settled status in all EU languages and a list of the Assisted Digital locations.

Work will begin shortly regarding how we record settled status, and anticipated requirements under new immigration act, on Oracle.
4.0 Workforce

4.1 In the event of a ‘no deal Brexit’, the Government is already working to avoid issues like fuel shortages or medicine supply problems. We’re working with the Scottish Government and other partners – and the council’s Incident Management Team (IMT) has been established, to plan for and reduce the impact of such situations. However, should a situation arise that affects our ability to deliver services, or makes it difficult for some employees to get to work, our Critical Incidents Guidance will apply. This is the same set of advice and procedures that applies in severe weather – and all managers and employees should familiarise themselves with this guidance to prepare for, and respond to, any incidents which may disrupt normal ways of working.

4.2 The Chief Executive has published a message on Brexit for the workforce. This can be found at http://fish.fife/brexit or www.fifedirect.org.uk/brexit and also went out through the employee app. Following this, a get-together between the Chief Executive and a small group of EU employees will be held on the 10th of April.

4.3 The quarterly manager’s report due in April will include nationality data, with information on why and how it is important to ensure this is completed. All managers have to post a return with regards to this report in order to confirm that the details held are correct. The report itself is now likely to be circulated towards the end of the month rather than the beginning. In addition, a banner has been placed on aboutMe to encourage those who have not already done so, to complete their nationality field.

5.0 Business / Economy

5.1 The Scottish Government (re-)launched a new Brexit Support Grant on 13th March 2019. Administered by Scottish Enterprise, it provides grants of up to £4,000 to help SMEs manage a wide range of Brexit impacts. The grant can be used to fund activities like consultancy support, professional fees, external training international market research.

5.2 After Brexit, a visa waiver will be required to visit EU member states. This will cost around £6.30 and be valid for three years, but won’t come into force until 2021. Until then, in the event of a No-Deal Brexit, visitors will be able to stay for up to 90 days out of any 180-day period. If there is a deal, EU citizens and UK nationals will be able to travel freely with a passport until the end of the agreed transition period.

6.0 European Funding

6.1 There is no change in relation to the current funding programme for which we draw down EU funds. In relation to replacement funding the Scottish Parliament’s have launched an inquiry on post-Brexit funding. The call for views will close on Thursday 25 April 2019. Officers are currently drafting a response and will also feed comments into the response being prepared by the East Of Scotland European Consortium.

7.0 Public Procurement

7.1 At present, much UK public procurement is regulated by EU rules, coming from the main EU treaty and specific EU directives. The current regulations will be amended to ensure they remain operable and functional on exit. The majority of the procurement regulations and in particular the different procedures available to the
Council as a contracting authority will remain exactly the same. The key difference will be the need to send notices to a new UK e-notification services instead of the EU Publications Office. This is likely to be facilitated through the existing platform, Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) so should be seamless for the Council. Scottish Government are leading on this amendment.

7.2 The Procurement Team are continuing discussions with applicable suppliers in an attempt to identify the contracts/supplies/services etc. at risk of disruption and working up a ‘category statement’ to attempt to capture main issues/concerns and actions/intended actions. This activity is supplemented with a Council wide review of Business Continuity Plans and services flagging areas of concern in terms of key suppliers to Procurement.

8.0 Environmental Impacts

8.1 The Environmental Health (Food & Workplace Safety) Team continue to undertake activities to help prepare in the case of a No Deal Brexit.

Export Health Certificates
The team have supported the work of the Scotland wide Brexit working group and its sub-groups arranged under SFELC (Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee). The main focus has been on the export of foodstuffs in particular fishery products.

To help businesses be able to export the Team have supported the work of Food Standards Scotland of contacting approved establishments to make them aware of the requirements they need to meet to be able to export, this includes being on the national list.

We are also working with a number of businesses who require to become an approved establishment. The time taken for this to happen will depend on the business and the steps they need to undertake to meet the requirements for approval.

The Environmental Health (Food & Workplace Safety) Team also ensured that Fife Council was registered with the Animal Plant & Health Agency to certify export health certificates. This can be undertaken by Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers who meet the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

Demand for export health certificates in the case of a No Deal Brexit is unknown but is likely significantly more than there is currently. The commodity and the requirements set by the importing Country and protocols agreed with DEFRA & the Animal Plant & Health Agency will determine the need and frequency for onsite checks prior to the issuing of export health certificates.

At present the issuing of export health certificates is not a statutory duty, but one that is undertaken to support local businesses. It is therefore a chargeable service. As part of end of year routine the fees and charges including those for export health certificates were reviewed. New charges for onsite inspections for export health certificates, late requests for certificates, cancellation of onsite visit and requests for duplicate/replacement certificates have been introduced.
Due to the uncertainty around Brexit and to support local businesses it has been agreed that the charges for onsite inspections for export health certificates, late requests for certificates, cancellation of onsite visit will not be implemented straight away. This will be reviewed during 2019/20 likely summertime.

**Food Insecurities**
The Environmental Health (Food & Workplace Safety) Team met with colleagues from both Community Planning and NHS Fife’s Public Health Team to discuss food insecurities. The team will be able to provide advice to businesses and organisations involved in mitigating food insecurities to help ensure food safety. If necessary we can also arrange to inspect quickly.

9.0 **Health & Social Care**

9.1 The Health and Social Care Partnership is continuing to monitor the situation regarding medicines, medical equipment and clinical consumables and workforce challenges. We are also continuing to engage with colleagues in NHS Fife, reporting through their Resilience Forum and progressing actions on Fife Council’s risk register. Business Continuity plans for delivery of critical services are currently being reviewed and our communications officer is linking with colleagues in both organisations to ensure consistent messaging to staff and preparation for public messaging, once National guidance has been issued.

The Partnership continues to engage with private and voluntary sector partners to provide support as necessary.