

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	18/03/19
Lead Officer	Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
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Subject	Preparation for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit)



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of actions being taken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) to prepare for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Following the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, NWFRS has been considering what impact the withdrawal from the EU could potentially have on the Authority and/or the Service's operations in North Wales.
- 3 Working both independently and with partner organisations, NWFRS has sought to identify potential impacts and the steps that could be taken to mitigate any negative effects.
- 4 Internally, structures are in place to identify and seek to mitigate any potential issues for delivering fire and rescue services. Externally, NWFRS has been working through its membership of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to identify and reduce any impacts for the wider community of North Wales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5 That Members note the information provided in this report.

BACKGROUND

- 6 The outcome of the referendum held on 23 June 2016 was that the UK would leave the EU. On 29 March 2017 the UK invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which triggered the UK's withdrawal, commonly known as Brexit, from the EU. With the withdrawal period set at 2 years, this means that the UK will cease to be a member of the EU on 30 March 2019.

INFORMATION

- 7 Work continues in order to identify potential impacts and risks arising from Brexit, and to determine and introduce mitigation measures.
- 8 A number of potential issues are generic to many parts of the public sector and relate to, for example, the potential for disruption to supply chains, and the effect of financial strain in an uncertain post-Brexit UK economy.
- 9 Specifically in North Wales consideration has been given to, for example, the road infrastructure and border control in relation to the port in Holyhead.
- 10 The Service has also been working with LRF partners to identify combined risks or where joint working is required to minimise potential negative effects on e.g. members of the public and local communities.
- 11 Much of this work has been necessarily theoretical and could not realistically go beyond maintaining a watching brief pending more concrete indications of risk.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	The Authority's second well-being objective relates to facilitating high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services. Disruption to e.g. supply chains could potentially impact the Authority's ability to achieve this objective.
Budget	Potential additional strain on the Authority's budget from mitigation measures and/or effect more generally on the UK economy after Brexit.
Legal	The Authority has legal duties to plan for, and seek to mitigate, risks that could affect its ability to provide its statutory services and to ensure that it has sufficient resources to do so.
Staffing	None identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	None identified.
Risks	Risks associated with continuing to deliver services and having sufficient financial resources in an uncertain post-Brexit UK economy (as above).