

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****SUPPORT TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUSINESSES: POST-BREXIT TRANSITION  
ON TRADE AND OTHER ISSUES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to allocate up to £26,250 from the Council's EU Transition funds, to cover a proposal to support Nottinghamshire businesses following the signing of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

**Information**

2. On 24 December 2020, the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) signed off a Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which came into place on 1 January 2021. The agreement will form the basis for UK-EU relations going forwards, with a review built in every 5 years; talks will continue about how to implement it most effectively. Online links to the UK-EU trade agreement and to supportive documentation, which contains new rules for living, working and trading together, can be found in the background section of this report.
3. New rules apply to travel and doing business with Europe. The UK and EU have agreed to some identical rules now. If one side takes exception to the changes, they can trigger a dispute, which could ultimately lead to tariffs (changes on imports) being imposed on some goods in the future. Many other details will follow the principles agreed in the TCA and at the time of writing this report, decisions are still to be made on data sharing and on financial services for example.
4. The Government's Brexit checker enables a personalised list of actions for individuals, businesses and families and is accessed on line at: <https://www.gov.uk/transition>. This 'checker tool' provides the facility to sign up to general alerts and updates.
5. Nottinghamshire County Council has supported businesses through the EU transition period, including the delivery of services, signposting residents, partners and businesses to any advice, guidance and information they may need. This has been facilitated through the Council's partnership with the D2N2 Growth Hub notably through the website at <https://www.d2n2growthhub.co.uk/international/brexit/> coupled with direct support in the form of resilience events, webinars and direct advice through the Council's Business Advisers within the Growth and Economic Development team.
6. Additionally, the Council's Trading Standards team have been advising on the transition from the EU and businesses products and services, including changes to new UK conformity marks <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/trading-standards/business-advice/commercial-services>
7. To support preparations for this, Nottinghamshire County Council received two lots of £87,500 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in financial years

2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020. The allocations were intended to be spent on planning and strengthening the Council's resources. It is also understood that some additional funds were allocated to East Midlands Councils.

8. The money allocated was to be spent on resources to ensure the council had the capacity to provide timely and accurate information to businesses and residents who have questions on how Britain's exit from the EU affects them. Over the course of 2020, alongside partners and financed through this allocation, the Council supported a series of on-line events, designed to support businesses over preparations for EU Exit, in anticipation of the TCA. Facilitated by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), this culminated in a Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire-wide conference in late November 2020 when over 200 businesses participated in the sessions.
9. The strength of the long-standing relationship between the county council and the Chamber is built on improving outcomes to assist the people of Nottinghamshire to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth, coupled with a commitment to helping businesses thrive. Feedback from the on-line events was positive and offered insight into what additional support may be required. As the Council and the Chamber play a critical role in making a success of the transition from the EU, officers working in partnership with the Chamber have analysed the best ways to provide business support to help Nottinghamshire businesses and maximise the opportunities from international trade.
10. The outcome is the proposal to support businesses during 2021, presented at **Appendix A**. Three distinct areas are covered, offering: specialised workshops; a virtual Nottinghamshire International Trade Conference; and the establishment of a Nottinghamshire International Trade Forum. Member approval is sought on allocating up to £26,250 from the Council's Brexit funds to cover the interventions proposed.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. Members have always remained steadfast in supporting Nottinghamshire businesses. As the transition period has now ended, this report proposes support to businesses as they continue to operate in the new trading arrangements with the EU. It is for that reason, the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

12. Many Nottinghamshire businesses employ people from EU countries or import and export goods and supplies. It is important that businesses are supported to avoid any potential disruption to their business and maximise the opportunities available.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

14. The Council's Brexit fund balance of £151,000 is currently held in a reserve. There are enough funds to cover all three interventions outlined in this proposal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1) To agree to the business support proposal as outlined in this report and in Appendix A and approve the appropriate allocation from the Council's Brexit reserve funds.

## **COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE**

**Leader of the Council**

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## **Constitutional Comments (KK 08/01/2021)**

15. The proposals in this report are within the remit of Policy Committee.

## **Financial Comments (DJK 23/12/2020)**

16. The cost of running the workshops, conference and trade group will be funded from the Brexit reserve, as detailed in the financial implications within Paragraph 14.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- The UK-EU trade agreement:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/948119/EU-UK\\_Trade\\_and\\_Cooperation\\_Agreement\\_24.12.2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948119/EU-UK_Trade_and_Cooperation_Agreement_24.12.2020.pdf)
- The UK Government Summary Explainer:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/948093/TCA\\_SUMMARY\\_PDF.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948093/TCA_SUMMARY_PDF.pdf)
- EU Explanatory Materials incl FAQs  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_2531](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2531)
- *Planning for possible no-deal exit from the European Union*, Report to Policy Committee, published 18 September 2019

## **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All