

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE: BREXIT STAKEHOLDER EVENT

Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 3.50pm.

EU Exit and the NI Protocol: The Implications for Councils & Issues to be considered.

Submission By: Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Presented by: The Mayor, Alderman Mark Fielding and
Aidan McPeake, Director of Environmental Services

1.0 Introduction

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is a local government district covering most of the northern part of Northern Ireland. It was created on 1 April 2015 by merging the Borough of Ballymoney, the Borough of Coleraine, the Borough of Limavady and the District of Moyle. Our area prides itself on being a great place to live, work and visit. Very few areas can boast the richness and diversity of the landscape this Council has to offer. Our area attracts thousands of tourists every year as it is home to a number of very prestigious events.

2.0 BREXIT Issues

2.1 Economy

There are fears that business and industry will not have sufficient time to prepare and implement the new requirements before the end of the Transition period.

EU Exit business readiness has been impacted significantly by the reprioritisation of efforts during the COVID-19 emergency.

Business owners have raised the following concerns:

- The potential impact on the supply chain for goods entering and leaving the area.
- Increase in costs due to additional paperwork and compliance requirements.
- There is uncertainty over what will be required for small enterprises who sell direct, balancing the implications of selling cross border and also to mainland GB. Will they have to administer two different compliance systems?
- There is uncertainty as to whether the large UK chains will continue to trade in NI if the costs of trading increase due to additional paperwork and legislation.
- There are queries from our food manufacturing and approved premises on health marks, labelling etc. Clarity is required from the FSA on how to interpret the guidance.

- Providing sufficient capacity within GB to certify high risk foods for export will be a massive challenge. Clarity is required as to what arrangements are being put in place to provide required certification, including officers and IT systems for the official certification for High Risk Foods Not of Animal Origin.

Q. What contingency measures are going to be in place to allow businesses to continue to function effectively at the end of the Transition period?

Q. If there is a non-negotiated outcome to Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU, trade in goods would be on WTO terms for GB. What are the likely impact for NI businesses under this scenario where there may be reduced market access and reduction in competitiveness in export markets?

Q. There will undoubtedly be an initial period of “mixed messages” to business in NI (and those trading into NI from GB and Ireland) around how things will work in practice from 1st January 2021. Is there a NI Communications Strategy in place which will give businesses clear direction on what they must do and when they must do it by?

Q. Is there going to be a funding stream to replace current EU funded schemes mainly PEACE, RDP etc?

2.2 Tourism

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council depends significantly on its tourist trade. There are a number of issues and concerns raised by the local tourist industry. These issues have been compounded further by COVID-19 restrictions which have, and may continue to have, a significant bearing on tourist destinations for some time.

The issues raised have been in relation to:

- Uncertainty over crossing the NI/RoI border for tourists.
- The consequences of Brexit and the European market deciding not to travel.
- A potential demarcation of Ireland as a holiday destination and the fear that many will decide to stay in the Republic of Ireland rather than travel into Northern Ireland.
- Issues with driving licence, hire car insurance and ordinary car insurance for cross border movement.
- Potential impact on GB holiday makers not wishing to travel into a perceived different border region.

Q. What measures are in place to encourage tourist to come to NI and reduce the impact of tourists from EU or GB not wishing to travel to NI due to perceived difficulties in travel restrictions?

Q. Will EU visitors travelling by boat to Council owned marinas, require any additional security checks or passport control measures?

2.3 Agriculture

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has a large Agri-Food Industry and there are concerns from these farmers and business owners. They have raised the following issues.

- Clarity is sought in relation to measures for the protection of our main NI Agri-Food Industry.
- NI Agri-Food product labelling requirements for trade agreements is unclear.
- Concerns have been raised that all imports will not have to meet UK welfare and Environmental Standards. This puts farming and food products in jeopardy and will allow an opening for cheap imports which do not meet our high welfare standards. How is this going to be overcome?
- Delays at ports and border crossings is likely to impact on traders dealing in just-in-time goods such as plants and flowers.

2.4 Transport

The Council owns a ferry terminal at Magilligan Point which is a border crossing point. It also owns a number of working harbours where EU registered vessels dock and land catch. A number of Cruise Liners land passengers at Council harbours.

Q. Is there a requirement for additional security or cross border trade inspections at Magilligan Ferry Terminal?

Q. Will additional measures need to be put in place for EU fishing trawlers landing their catch in NI harbours?

Q. Will additional measures be required for Cruise Liner passengers landing in NI ports?

2.5 Waste

Council has responsibility for collection and disposal of waste within the Borough. Some of the waste is exported to EU including RoI for treatment processes for recycling, as well as, Energy from Waste products. Transboundary movements of waste will continue as the UK will continue to be a Basel Convention party and an OECD member. However, there is a concern around customs and border disruption. It is predicted that transit through customs will take longer and it is expected that a significant percentage of goods will be checked leading to delays and increases in haulage rates likely. This may be added onto Council contracts incurring additional cost. There are also possible knock on effect of any delays down the supply chain such as storage issues e.g. RDF storage time before degradation can occur.

Q. Is there an indication of delay times at ports and border crossings for the export of goods including waste products?

Q. Is there sufficient storage space at ports or border crossing points caused by possible delays?

Q. Is there likely to be any procurement problems if EU companies are bidding for waste contracts in NI?