



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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To: Leaders of English local authorities

**MHCLG and DExEU LOCAL AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT ON THE UK'S EXIT FROM THE
EUROPEAN UNION**

We are writing jointly to the Leaders of all local authorities in England to provide you with an update on our engagement with the local government sector and our offer going forward as we enter a crucial phase of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. We are confident of securing a good deal with the EU, but as a responsible Government, we are preparing for all scenarios.

Both of our departments have been taking positive steps to engage with the local government sector on EU exit issues in recent months. In 2018, Ministers from both of our departments have visited regions across England and met with local authority members in order to hear directly about the issues they face on EU exit. We have also established a Local Government EU Exit Delivery Board and DexEU has published over 100 'no deal' technical notices. In advance of the publication of these notices we held a number of teleconferences with local government representative bodies.

The Local Government EU Exit Delivery Board (the Board) was initially announced at the LGA Conference in July and held its inaugural meeting later the same month. Ministers from various Whitehall departments attend the Board along with representatives from the LGA, County Council Network, District Council Network, London Councils and the Core and Key Cities groups. This meeting has already proved an invaluable vehicle for Government and sector representatives to discuss important issues.

To date the Board has discussed important issues including: the Government's White Paper on the Future Relationship between the UK and the EU; the UK Settled Status Scheme; DEFRA policy that impacts on local government; the rights of EU nationals in the local elections in 2019 and contingency plans for a no deal scenario. Due to the nature of the topics we are considering, I am sure you will appreciate the need and value of a 'safe space' for the free and frank exchange of views. But we can assure you that the input of sector representatives has been invaluable and has seen Government respond positively.

The Board will continue to provide a platform for national and local government to monitor and discuss the preparedness and implementation of EU Exit. Furthermore, the technical notices published by the Government have also provided important practical information on the likely implications of a no-deal scenario on local government. We hope these are useful for your authority's planning to prepare for the unlikely eventuality of there not being a deal in place by the end of March 2019.

The most recent tranche of technical notices were published week beginning 8 October and can be found on the Gov.uk website. The next stage of engagement will begin shortly with a programme of regional events between now and Christmas for local authority executive leaders and heads of relevant council services. Our officials have been working with some of yours to arrange these events. We are grateful for your ongoing help and willingness to engage positively in this crucial work. An initial programme of events will be issued shortly.

We are keen to ensure that Government is maximising the opportunity to listen and talk to local authorities. Senior MHCLG officials are regularly talking to executive leaders from a representative cross-section of councils and Ministers are travelling around the country providing updates on negotiations and listening to issues raised by local government.

In parallel to our engagement with you, MHCLG officials have been leading a programme of work with relevant departments across Whitehall to assess the range of implications of EU Exit on local authority services, confirm the action required of councils and, importantly, challenge and support departments on new burdens assessment and funding. The results of this work will be shared this autumn through our series of regional events.

We also recognise that what will happen with our borders when we exit the EU is an important issue for many local authorities. A cross-government Border Delivery Group (BDG) has been set up to bring together individual departmental plans to form an overall picture and plan of what we need to do to ensure that the border continues to function as efficiently and effectively as possible post exit. The BDG has established a range of groups to enable open discussion, including with local authorities and port health authorities, about the issues that exit presents at the border and how they are best managed.


Finally, we would like to thank you for all you are doing to ensure that your local authority is preparing for EU exit. We know there is still so much to do, but we can assure you that Government is under no illusion of the important role that local authorities will play in securing a successful and smooth exit from the EU.

If you would like to discuss engagement opportunities or the content of this letter, please get in contact with our offices via:

LGEengagement@communities.gov.uk or correspondence@dexeu.gov.uk



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