

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	15 January 2020
Title of Report:	Policy Brief
Lead Member:	Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader)
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Kevin.McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor)
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Your Reference:	BILCO PB 15012020
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the latest national picture in respect of policy announcements and legislation announced in the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019.

Recommendations and Reasons

For Scrutiny to consider the information provided in regard to their role and future agenda items.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Delivery of the Corporate Plan and Plymouth Plan needs to take account of emerging policy and the legislative picture.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

N/A

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

N/A

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below



Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Policy Brief							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 06.02.2020											
Cabinet Member approval: Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council)											
Date approved: 08.01.2020											

POLICY BRIEF

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny
Committee



15 January 2020

The information contained within this Brief is correct at the time of writing (18/12/2019).

HEADLINES

- Conservatives win a majority of 365 MPs
- Government ministers remain in post and continue to run their departments, Nicky Morgan remains as culture sec, Simon Hart named as Welsh sec
- New Parliament will be summoned to meet on Tuesday 17 December, when the business will be the election of the Speaker and the swearing-in of members.
- 19th Dec is set aside for a queen's speech
- Labour leadership election not expected until the new year
- The UK threat level from terrorism has been reduced from Severe to Substantial - meaning an attack is likely. (This is still the case following the attack on 29th Nov 2019)
- [Independent review](#) backs higher National Living Wage concluding that there is room for exploring a higher NLW in the UK up to two-thirds of the median wage
- [Funding will be available to partner organisations](#) to help vulnerable people claim Universal Credit
- Councils to see an [increase in funding](#) to deliver free childcare places to support children and parents

There will be a Queen's Speech on the on 19 December 2019 (See appended brief) outlining the Government's intentions over the next Parliament.

GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

[Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#). £50 million Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme will encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees and help to tackle climate change. The new Woodland Carbon Guarantee will encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees and create new woodland in return for payments as those trees grow. (Announced 4 November 2019).

[Department for Transport](#) Local authorities urged to take advantage of electric car funding as 'league table' of charging infrastructure released. The government is clear that it wants driving an electric vehicle to be convenient for people from all corners of the country, and that local authorities have a key role to play. Funding for electric vehicle charge points remains available in 2019/20 through numerous schemes. (Announced 2 November 2019).

The Planning Inspectorate made an [announcement](#) explaining their approach to casework during the pre-election period. (Announced 7 November 2019).

OPEN CONSULTATIONS

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The Government are running a [consultation](#) that sets out plans for the Future Homes Standard, including proposed options to increase the energy efficiency requirements for new homes in 2020. Consultation closes on 7 February 2020.

Appendix I

The Queen's Speech, delivered today, outlines the Government's intentions over the next Parliament, sets out 29 bills

Brexit:

- The Government's priority is to deliver Brexit by introducing legislation to ensure it happens on 31st January 2020, ratifying the Deal negotiated in October. Further Bills around Fisheries, Agriculture, Trade and free movement will also be introduced, and actions to provide greater stability and certainty for the financial services sector.
- Negotiations on trade agreements with other countries will begin as soon as possible

Immigration:

- Points based immigration system for skilled workers worldwide

Education:

- Increase levels of funding per pupil in schools (previously announced)

Public Services:

- NHS Funding Bill and NHS Long Term Plan - National Health Service's multi-year funding settlement, agreed earlier this year, will be enshrined in law.
- New visa to ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to the United Kingdom. – very little additional detail
- Hospital car parking charges removed for those in greatest need.
- Extra funding for social care and seeking cross-party consensus for social care reform, including ensuring no one needs to sell their home to pay for it
- Reform of the Mental Health Act

Workers and families:

- Employment Bill - build on existing employment law with measures that protect those in low-paid work and the gig economy.
- Raise threshold for National Insurance contributions
- Increase National Living Wage
- Measures to encourage flexible working
- Introduce the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers and a focus on pensions to help people plan and save for later life

Environment:

- Target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050
- World leaders on climate change, hosting COP26 in 2020
- Protect and improve environment – Bill to enshrine into law environmental principles and legally binding targets, including air quality
- Ban exporting of polluting plastic waste outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Infrastructure and investment:

- Invest in public services and infrastructure, whilst keeping debt under control and ensuring a responsible fiscal strategy
- Publish a National Infrastructure Strategy
- Investment in world-leading science research and skills
- Give communities more control on investment so they can decide what is best for the area

- White Paper to reiterate the commitment to levelling up opportunities and investment in the regions across England

Business:

- Changes to business rates – proposed 50% business rate discount for small firms, including independent cinemas, music venues and pubs
- Establish a National Skills Fund
- Laws to accelerate the delivery of gigabit capable broadband
- Increase tax credits for research and development

Housing and Planning:

- New measures to protect tenants and improve building safety
- Home ownership: discounts for local first-time buyers
- Planning White Paper - will make the planning process clearer, more accessible and more certainty for all users, including homeowners and small businesses.

Constitutional reform:

- Introduce voter ID
- Constitution, Democracy and Rights commission to be established
- Repeal Fixed Term Parliament Act

Criminal justice system:

- Fair justice system: establish a Royal Commission to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process
- New tougher sentencing laws – serious violent offenders will serve longer in custody
- New laws requiring schools, Police, Councils and health authorities to work together to prevent serious crime
- Swift justice for those charged with knife possession
- Legislation to support victims of crime and their families
- Develop measures to tackle hostile activity by foreign states

Defence:

- An Integrated Defence, Security and Foreign Policy Review – the deepest review of these issues since the end of the Cold War.
- Investment in the armed forces
- Honour the armed forces covenant, incorporated to law
- Commitment to spend 2% on NATO

Transport:

- Introduce legislation to ensure that there are minimal levels of service disruption during transport strikes

Northern Ireland:

- Restoring devolved Government at Stormont

International:

- Promote UK's interests including, freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law
- Developing a sanctions regime to directly address human rights abuse