

Recommendations from Cabinet 13 November 2018

Councillor Jonny Morris (Chair of the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee (BILCO)) introduced the report from BILCO.

Following a debate Cabinet agreed to –

1. thank the Councillors of BILCO for their diligent consideration of the potential impact of Brexit on the City.
2. resolve to write to the representatives of Plymouth Manufacturing Group, Destination Plymouth, The University College of St Mark and St John and the University of Plymouth thanking them for giving their time and expert opinion.
3. note the progress made in implementing the recommendations it endorsed in September in relation to the Fishing and Fisheries Select Committee.
4. endorse BILCO's recommendations in relation to the impact of Brexit on Higher Education with the amendments noted below.

4.1 to ask the Government to:

(a) clarify the status of EU citizens in the UK in the event of a 'no deal Brexit;

(Accepted) Reason – in spite of the progress made in implementing the Settled Status Scheme for EU migrants who will have 5 years residence in the UK by December 2020 there is still a lack of clarity in how this will be operated in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit.

(b) Take international students out the net migration figures and give an assurance that changes to immigration rules and visa requirements will not limit the ability of universities to attract and recruit world leading researchers and teachers;

(Accepted) Reason – International students contribute an estimated £120m annually to our local economy. The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report on International Students recognised that although international student numbers have risen in recent years, the UK's overall market share has fallen slightly and competitor countries are more active in recruitment. The MAC nevertheless rejected the suggested made by many respondents to their call for evidence to remove International Students from net migration figures arguing that, "if there is a problem with students in the net migration target, it is with the target itself rather than the inclusion of students in that target". Since the government has yet to commit to removing the target entirely we support the recommendation.

- (c) **Provide greater clarity on what the UK Shared Prosperity Fund might look like and where possible to negotiate close relations with existing structures such as Framework Programme 9;**

(Accepted) Reason – we anticipate details of the Shared Prosperity Fund will be published before Christmas 2018. The government may instead opt to maintain access to EU funding streams post Brexit. This will be clarified in the terms of the withdrawal agreement which will need to be in place by December 2018.

- (d) **Offer EU nationals continued access to UK research facilities and a matched funding scheme to support international collaborative research;**

(Accepted) Reason – the future ability of EU nationals engaged in research in the UK and vice versa to access research facilities is also likely to be clarified in the withdrawal arrangements.

- (e) **Allow us greater flexibility in how we use Adult Education and Schools funding and the residual balance of the Apprenticeship Levy.**

(Added) We want to use the funding we already have more flexibly to improve the performance of our secondary schools around STEM subjects and to support our development of an Apprenticeship/Skills hub, e.g. each year c£2m is spent on Maths and English retakes across the City. We would like to pilot the flexible use of funds provided by the Department of Education for adult education and schools to provide additional support to pupils at risk of failure.

- (f) **Devolve funding for further education, adult education and employment support programmes, enabling greater local control of careers' advice and guidance.**

(Added) We have one of the most centralised employment and skills systems in the developed world. Local areas have little ability to influence priorities, funding or delivery. With over 13,000 people in our City in receipt of Employment Support Allowance we see the need for specific measures to support adults who have spent significant periods out of work through ill health. Businesses are an essential part of the local conversation to re-engineer the education and skills landscape so that industry directly benefits from developing the local workforce.

- (g) **Higher education sector to collaborate with the Plymouth Growth Board and/or Destination Plymouth to consider how best to market the City internationally as an attractive place to study and as a destination for employers and employees.**

(Amended) Reason – the amendment locates lead responsibility with the University of Plymouth.

5. to receive a further report in February 2019, covering the work BILCO expects to undertake in November 2018 and January 2019, in the context of the Administration's Pledge to undertake and publish research on the economic impact of Brexit both positive and negative.