



<u>Committee and date</u>
Place Overview Committee
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10.00am

<u>Item No</u>
7
Public

Report of the Brexit Task and Finish Group

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Summary

This paper presents the report of the Brexit Task and Finish Group to the Place Overview Committee. Their work has focused on economic challenges and benefits of Brexit for Shropshire, and in doing so they have considered a wide range of information and heard from a number of external witnesses. The Task and Finish Group has developed its conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence gathered through its work.

Recommendations

- A. Members are asked to consider and comment on the Task and Finish group report and endorse the recommendations set out below:
1. That the Task and Finish group pauses it's wider work on Brexit and Shared Prosperity Fund until the Government provides greater clarity which the group can use to shape recommendations and responses to any consultation.
 2. That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirms that the Task and Finish group refreshes the scope and focus of its Terms of Reference to incorporate more detailed consideration of Agriculture and Land Based Industries and Skills and Labour Force.
 3. That the Council continues to work on cross-border opportunities with the Welsh Government and Neighbouring Local Authorities to identify and progress economic growth and wider benefits.
 4. That the Council should lobby MPs and Government about concerns over the lack of clarity over Brexit negotiations and how the future will look for Shropshire and its neighbours in order to reduce speculation and improve business confidence.

Opportunity Risk Assessment

The work of the Task and Finish Group has taken account of the potential risks and opportunities offered by Brexit for Shropshire. These have been summarised within the Task and Finish group report and in more detail in appendix 2 of the report.

At this stage the lack of clarity from the Government as a result of limited progress with Brexit and future arrangements, including trade agreements, has been recognised by the Task and Finish group as a challenge.

Financial Assessment

There is no financial decision or impact arising from this report

Report

1. The Brexit Task and Finish Group was established to focus on the economic challenges and benefits for Shropshire. This would be used to inform the Council's position and requirements of Government on Brexit in general, and more specifically when the Government comes forwards with its proposals to replace European funding initiatives with a UK approach, the 'Shared Prosperity Fund'.
2. The Task and Finish Group have considered information from a wide range of sources in the form of a SWOT analysis (appendix 1 of the Task and Finish Group Report). They have also heard from officers and from external witnesses who were able to share knowledge and experience from across business sectors, government departments and economic organisations.
3. The key findings from the Task and Finish group work have been summarised, identifying the potential risks and opportunities, the associated challenges, and possible mitigation. They have been organised under the headings below and are set out in more detail in appendix 2 of the Task and Finish group report.
 - Business Confidence/Economic Performance
 - Trade
 - Skills and Labour Force
 - Cost of labour
 - Changes to CAP/replacement of direct subsidies
 - Other

4. Through this work Agriculture and Land-based Industries and Skills and Labour Force have emerged as key topic areas that would benefit from further work through Overview and Scrutiny. These are related to not only Brexit opportunities and concerns, but require a wider consideration in the context of Shropshire's economy given their importance and far reaching implications. In preparation for this the Task and Finish group have worked through two mind-maps to help set out the breadth of issues that could be considered, and also how they relate to each other. These are attached at appendix 3 and 4 of the Task and Finish group report.

Background Papers
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Nic Laurens Robert Macey Steve Davenport
Local Member All
Appendices Appendix 1 – The report of the Brexit Task and Finish Group