

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Leader of Portsmouth City Council

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The Minister

Dear Minister,

Funding Portsmouth's preparation for No Deal Brexit

Whilst I welcome the additional funding that the Government have announced to help local authorities prepare for a No Deal Brexit, it is still inadequate and does not meet the costs we have already incurred let alone fund any future costs. I would urge you to commit to guaranteeing that any Brexit costs we have incurred, or will incur in the future, will be funded by central Government so that our local residents do not have to meet the costs.

Portsmouth International Port is the 2nd busiest cross channel port (behind Dover). Whilst we accept that the Government's focus has been on Dover and Kent because of the scale of their operations, we do feel that the impact on Portsmouth has been largely ignored. The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) undertook the required risk assessment under the Civil Contingencies Act and identified that there were significant risks of congestion, which could impact on both the economy of the sub-region and the delivery of goods to the Channel Islands. They identified that mitigation was required to deal with this congestion.

The LRF devised Operation Transmission as mitigation and for this to work it required Portsmouth City Council to spend £1.13m to run a traffic management plan and create a lorry park to help keep the M275 flowing freely. As part of Operation Transmission Hampshire County Council also had to spend money on making preparations to allow lorries to be stacked on the A31.

Portsmouth City Council has received £286k of Brexit port funding from the Government. This leaves a shortfall of £844k compared to the funding that has been spent to date on Operation Transmission. As with all other Unitary local authorities the council has also received £315k of funding to prepare for Brexit but these are to cover the costs that all local authorities will face not those specific to us as a port city.

I am aware that the LRF can bid for £1.25m to cover the capital costs associated with preparing for Brexit with a port in its area. However this will only cover the existing shortfall costs of Portsmouth and Hampshire if the LRF decide to allocate the funding this way. With No Deal still the default option for the end of October the LRF has decided that Operation Transmission will need to be stood up again. The costs associated with running operation transmission just in Portsmouth are £93k per week and there are mobilisation costs of £45k. I have already had to agree to funding of £215k as initial preparations. I have had to do this because of the timeframes needed to arrange the recruitment and training of traffic management officers. I have yet to receive the traffic modelling from the DfT that would help give me more intelligence for this decision. There will be additional costs for Hampshire County Council too.

I would urge you to make a commitment that all our costs (whether already incurred or to be incurred) associated with preparing for a No Deal Brexit in response to the LRF requests are met by central government. Without this our residents will suffer as the result of central government decision making.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerald Vernon-Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Leader of Portsmouth City Council