



Sir Peter Bottomley - bottomleyp@parliament.uk
Tim Loughton - tim.loughton.mp@parliament.uk

28th February 2019

Dear Sir Peter and Tim,

Re: Impact of Brexit

I have been asked by the members of the Adur & Worthing Business Partnership to write to you directly following a full and engaging discussion at our meeting on Tuesday 29th January. I have also had the opportunity to canvass the views of other local strategic partners following today's meeting of the Waves Ahead Partnerships' Forum which I chaired in Alex Bailey's absence.

As you know, a wide range of business interests are represented at the Partnership as well as representatives of the education sector; local authorities, utilities and third sector. A number of those present indicated that whilst their activities have been largely unaffected until now, they have introduced contingency planning and remain concerned about the potential impacts of Brexit.

While I have outlined specific concerns at Attachment A, the consistent theme here is one of certainty and confidence. Regardless of individual views on Brexit itself, members of the AWBP and the wider Waves Ahead network are requesting clarity so they can plan for the future and make those all-important investment and community protection decisions.

The Business Partnership supports Coasts Capital's open letter to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy dated 31 January 2019.

We also observe that the Brexit issue appears to be limiting government progress on other matters – of national and local interest. The parliamentary approach is also a concern and many businesses losing confidence in Parliament. Locally there is a lot of frustration regarding two local subjects in particular:

- A27 Worthing-Lancing scheme where there has been no material progress for approximately 18 months;
- Lack of decision from Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on to call in the New Monks Farm planning application, which exceeds 100 days. As members of the Greater Brighton Economic Board, we fully support the Chair's letter of 7 February 2019 on this matter.



As we move forward over the coming weeks I would be grateful if you can keep in mind issues local business and community leaders have identified. The community needs confidence, clarity and certainty in the parliamentary process and the outcomes from that process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A Swayne'.

Andrew Swayne
AWBP Chairman

The key business driven concerns can be summarised as follows:

- businesses scaling investment back until there is greater certainty – and the resulting impact of this on their long term prospects;
- potential currency and travel restrictions impacting on the service sector;
- resulting weakness of the pound affecting costs;
- loss of employees and the difficulties of recruitment in manufacturing;
- utilities sector and the availability of supplies – for example chemicals for water treatment;
- perishable goods are particularly vulnerable to delays at ports;
- recruiting seasonal staff to work in horticulture;
- lack of staff and applicants for the care and health care sector, be they public, private or third sector
- fall in applications from EU students for placements;
- concerns from the language school sector which is an important part of the local economy
- impact on spending in the charity sector;
- stockpiling is not an option for many SMEs, but some have increased stock (and therefore working capital) as a contingency plan for no deal;
- uncertainty over any additional legislative requirements and ability to compete with EU suppliers;
- lack of clarity about business support, regeneration funding and the long gap between Local Growth Fund and the very vague Shared Prosperity Fund;
- some overseas clients delaying or not placing orders due to Brexit uncertainty.

The wider community concerns include:

- short and medium term pressures on food prices, adding to poverty which is already evidenced examples such as increased load on Worthing Homes and projects such as their Community House which support those in or close to crisis;

- the many elements of the community have no capacity to stock pile are becoming more vulnerable as areas of not knowing what they can do in the event of a hard Brexit – having this worry is a failure of government in its duty of care;
- impact of loss and uncertainty in the European Social Fund projects and the related lack of clarity of how the Shared Prosperity Fund will work in this area;
- lack of EU applicant in key skills such as foreign language teachers;
- reduction in volunteering due to economic pressures on volunteers which will compound third sector delivery challenges;
- additional pressure on our existing road network due to changes in truck movements which could impact emergency service response times;
- the above with existing pressures putting significant impact on community cohesion and a longer term concern re public order, particularly if there are food or medicine supply chain disruptions