

Brexit contingency planning stepped up

Justice Secretary briefed on Police Scotland's EU exit preparations.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf has been updated by senior Police Scotland officers today on how the service is getting ready to deal with the implications of an EU exit.

The Cabinet Secretary visited the Brexit Coordination Centre at Bilston Glen, Midlothian, to hear about its role in supporting emergency and other essential services to sustain critical operations and keep vulnerable communities and the wider public safe.

Speaking after meeting staff and Police Scotland's EU Exit Tactical Commander ACC Steve Johnson, Mr Yousaf said:

"The Scottish Government is intensifying its preparations for all EU exit possibilities in order to protect Scotland's economy, businesses and workers. While we are doing everything we can to prepare, we will not be able to mitigate all of the impacts of a 'no deal' exit on Scotland.

"The Chief Constable has been clear that Police Scotland will be ready to respond to any civil contingency issues arising from EU exit, including the policing of the country's ports and borders, and possible protests and civil unrest.

"The Brexit Coordination Centre will be central to managing those priorities and the wider resilience response across local authorities, emergency services and other public sector bodies – ensuring Scotland stands ready to deal with the implications of leaving the EU.

"Decisions around officer deployment and contingency planning are of course operational decisions for the Chief Constable. I welcome his decision to put 360 officers on standby from today for EU exit-related incidents as a prudent, sensible approach to contingency planning to ensure Police Scotland remains well-placed to keep people safe."

ACC Johnson said:

"Our number one priority is protecting the people of Scotland and we have been preparing for the operational impact of Britain's exit from the European Union for many months now.

"We have detailed plans in place to address all the potential challenges, including a 'no deal' Brexit, which could lead to

delays at borders and ports and to political protest. Part of our planning has ensured that we have sufficient officer availability during critical periods.

“The Brexit Coordination Centre allows us to work closely with all relevant multi-agency partners to address any civil contingency matters which may arise. Working with these partners, we are ready to respond to emergencies to ensure the safety of the public during an unprecedented set of circumstances which will challenge policing in the months ahead.”

Background

The Brexit Co-ordination Centre consists of four elements: a National Multi-Agency Co-ordination Centre (MACC), a Police Operations & Co-ordination Centre (POCC), Public Order Command hub and an Information Co-ordination Hub.

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