

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.09/19

Date: 16 July 2019

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: Funding to support local authorities with preparations for Brexit

At the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2019, officers were asked for a briefing note regarding how the £210,000 Government grant allocated to the Council for Brexit preparations has been spent.

Whilst individual service areas within the Council, have been preparing for Brexit as appropriate – assessing potential impacts on supply chains and working with colleagues at Kent County Council on emergency plans in the event of disruption at the ports and on our road network – this work has been carried out within existing resources.

The grant has actually been allocated to the Council's Interest and Financing budget. The Council had been taking advantage of the very low short term interest rates, as leading economic commentators and our own treasury advisors had been predicting that rates would stay low. However, the uncertainty caused by the protracted Brexit negotiations meant that this was no longer a prudent position to take. The grant has been used primarily to offset the increased interest costs associated with moving from higher levels of short term debt to the greater certainty offered by longer term loans.

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