

COUNCIL – 3 MARCH 2020

MOTION ON NOTICE

EU SETTLED STATUS FOR EU CITIZENS LIVING IN THE EAST HERTS DISTRICT FOLLOWING BREXIT

Background

Part 3 of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB) gives powers in UK law to implement provisions for protecting citizens' rights in the Withdrawal Agreement (WA), and the similar separation agreements with Switzerland and with the EEA EFTA states – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The citizens' rights provisions in the WA set out a framework for the continued legal residence (and associated rights, including social security and healthcare rights) of EU citizens living in the UK, and UK nationals living in the EU, at the end of the transition or implementation period (31 December 2020). EU citizens may apply for EU Settled Status, with the deadline being no sooner than six months after the end of the transition period. Currently this is 30 June 2021.

The House of Commons issued as briefing paper, '8772 Citizens' rights provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill 2019-20' on 3 January 2020. This highlighted that some EU citizens may be unaware of the need to apply for settled status or have difficulty in doing so.

2.2 'it has been estimated that about 30% of EU citizens may struggle with the EUSS application process, whether due to a lack of awareness of the scheme or difficulties making an application or proving their eligibility. They are therefore particularly vulnerable to losing their status and entitlements in the UK. Groups identified include the elderly, people with limited English, children and young people in the care system, homeless people, people who arrive soon before the deadline and people in casual employment.'

Officers at East Herts District Council have undertaken commendable work to ensure the EU citizens are aware of the requirement to apply for settled status. An update on progress was last issued in August 2019. The Council has some information for EU citizens on its website;

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/latest-news/2019/help-eu-citizens-east-herts>

As the deadline approaches there is an opportunity for the Council to ensure that EU citizens know they remain welcome in the District and to improve information for residents.

MOTION

In relation to 'Part 3 of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill' and the requirement for EU citizens to apply for EU Settled Status this Council:

1. declares that EU citizens are welcome in the District of East Herts.
2. will undertake an urgent review of the information it provides on its website and elsewhere to ensure that all EU citizens, including vulnerable groups and those with impairments have easy access to information regarding how to apply for EU Settled Status.

Proposed by Councillor J Dumont, and seconded by Councillor S Bell on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group.