

## PHECD Scrutiny panel 1.9.15

*Statement to panel*

### **Referendum on membership of the EU**

We are less than 18 months away from a vote on our membership of the EU

We are less than a year away from the start of the campaign concerning our membership, although some may argue that the campaign has already started.

There will be many emotive issues & images, not least of which concern the movement of people, whether that is within the EU as a whole or the wider migration of refugees from conflict, persecution & poverty that is currently such a problem for the east of the EU in particular.

However there are economic & social issues that have a specific bearing on residents in B&NES that should & must be aired, & which need research & scrutiny. Some are areas that specifically come within the remit of this panel include:

- (1) Economic investment & growth does in part come from companies wanting to invest within the EU.
- (2) Economic confidence relies on stability for forward planning.
- (3) Any regulation on immigration & the movement of labour may affect the ability to recruit staff to fill vacancies from the widest possible pool.

In these areas a business's ability to thrive may be influenced by the upcoming referendum.

Also:

- (1) C.30,000 UK citizens living abroad in the EU claim benefits to assist with housing & unemployment costs.
- (2) It is estimated that 2.2M UK citizens live outside the UK but within the EU, the majority of whom are above pension age.

There are implications for the demand on housing & social care if there is an influx of returning citizens.

I am asking that as part of the policy development element of the panel's role you should consider a risk assessment should be undertaken as to potential implications of a referendum. This should include not only the potential result of any referendum but also what affect the actual process will have on business confidence, this should include talking directly to local businesses.

I hope you will take this suggestion into account when looking at the panel's workplan

Robin Moss

1.9.15