

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
COUNCIL MEETING – 5 DECEMBER 2018
STATEMENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 20**

The Chief Executive to read the following statement:

“I have received the following statement submitted by Cllr Wade under Standing Order 20:

“Standing Order 20 allows for urgent matters to be brought before the council for debate. Few things can be more urgent than the rights of residents living here under EU27 passports; the local jobs and livelihoods that rely on frictionless trade in goods and services with Europe; or the ability of this council to fund itself in the event of a no deal scenario.

Yesterday afternoon, the Prime Minister opened 5 days of debate on the government’s withdrawal deal that will culminate with a vote on the 11th.

The Prime Minister’s deal has achieved the remarkable feat of uniting Brexiteers and Remainers.

The government has no majority for its deal, no room for manoeuvre, and no strategy for dealing with its inevitable defeat. Yet every economic institution from the Treasury to the Bank of England predicts that a no deal exit would have a catastrophic effect on the economy and public services. The threat to local government, already cut to the bone, is existential.

There is a way of breaking through the gridlock.

Yesterday, the advocate-general delivered an opinion to the Court of Justice stating that a notification under Article 50 can be unilaterally revoked. For the first time, a legal means of Britain remaining in the EU has been identified that does not require the consent of other member states.

There is at last a prospect for a meaningful people’s vote and a narrow window of opportunity before the vote on 11 December to let parliament know how this Borough feels - that a people’s vote with remain as an option is politically, and legally feasible and represents the will of our residents.

Brexit is not some issue outside the competence of the Council. It goes to the heart of our residents’ lives here. This Council can influence how MPs act.

We are now reaching the end game period with debate on the Withdrawal Agreement, and this Council can no longer put off the discussion about where it stands in the Brexit debate.

It is important to provide clarity to our residents, in a borough that overwhelming voted Remain. The Council should be seen to have a view. Remaining silent when 14 other London boroughs - half of the boroughs that voted Remain - have passed Motions calling for a People's Vote is just seen as side stepping an uncomfortable problem.

The default position would then be that the UK would have a disorderly no-deal Brexit with all the chaos that has been in the news.

So, it is essential that that the Government offer the nation a People's Vote.

Kensington and Chelsea has a high profile and we should make it clear that the Council supports a vote that has Remain as one of the options

A People's Voice provides the electorate for the first time with an informed choice and an opportunity for an unequivocal decision.

Parliament and politics are paralysed by an instruction given by the British people in June 2016. It is only fair to give them the choice of how that instruction is interpreted. That's why I am calling for an urgent debate on a people's vote on this government's Brexit deal."