

The Scottish Government is making contingency plans in case of no deal Brexit

The Scottish Government says it is accelerating work plans to help Scotland cope, as much as possible, if what they call a 'tragedy' of a no deal Brexit takes place, Constitutional Relations Secretary Michael Russell has said.

In a statement to Parliament, Mr Russell urged the UK Government to immediately rule out 'no deal' and made clear that, while the Scottish Government would do everything it could, there would still be severe damage to the Scottish economy and society. Mr Russell also confirmed to MSPs that the Scottish Government Resilience Committee (SGoRR) has been mobilised, convened by Deputy First Minister John Swinney, to consider the level of immediate response required.

Planning is ongoing to deal with:

- Severe disruption of goods at UK borders due to new customs arrangements in a 'no deal' scenario
- Food security and the ability of Scottish food and drink producers to export their goods to the EU
- The supply of medicines, medical devices and workforce for health and social care.

The Cabinet Secretary stressed the importance of the UK Government sharing planning assumptions and detailed modelling around a 'no deal' exit, to enable the necessary Scottish preparations to take place. This is particularly critical for medicines which may be subject to supply problems as work on stockpiling of medical devices and clinical consumables is ongoing.

Mr Russell said: "A 'no deal' Brexit is not yet inevitable – indeed, neither is leaving the EU at all – and I once again

urge the Prime Minister to rule out a 'no deal'.

"But as a responsible Government we cannot wait any longer. The consequences and risks are too pressing and too severe.

"The Scottish Government is ready to operate Brexit arrangements at very short notice but will continue to build preparedness and resilience.

"Under the leadership of the Deputy First Minister the SGoRR mechanism is now in operation providing a single clear, coordinating structure.

"But let me say that whilst this government will do everything we can to prepare, we must not let anyone believe we can do everything. "The nebulous approach of the UK Government to decision making on Brexit has meant that it is impossible to know when these plans might need to go into effect. "What a tragedy it is that we must take action for a 'no deal' exit as a result of the UK Government, to mitigate against the severe impacts on Scotland and the irreparable damage to our economy, our people and our society. "These challenges are not of our making. But being able to measure up to them is something that we can, and must, do."