

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 10 October 2018 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor George Fielding (in the Chair)

Councillors Frank Jonas BEM
Robert New

5. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Will Purvis, Scott Payter-Harris and Tom Wood.

6. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

7. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 22 March 2018 (AI 3)

Due to the change in membership of the panel the minutes were noted. It was reported that Mike Sellers, Port Director, had given the new panel members the opportunity for a similar presentation at the port officers in August to give them the necessary background for this review.

8. Review of Portsmouth International Port (AI 4)

- i) Mike Sellers, Port Director - took the opportunity to further update the panel (since the previous meeting of 22 March). Key facts included:
 - Portsmouth International Port (PIP) is the UK's largest municipal port
 - PIP contributed £7.8m to PCC budget in the last financial year
 - Brittany Ferries accounted for approximately 70% of the port income (sailing to France and Spain)
 - Portsmouth has the most destinations to the western channel
 - Condor Ferries serve the Channel Islands
 - MMD's fruit and vegetable business used to account for 70% of bananas imported to the UK going via Portsmouth this was now down to **50%** (still one of the largest fruit import services in UK)
 - MMD was diversifying its shipping business - e.g. the recent wind farm blades contract with MHI Vestas

- There are 2m passengers going through the port a year, 0.25m freight units, representing 900k vehicle movements
- PIP is the best connected port due to its close proximity to the M275 motorway and main shipping channels
- The main challenge ahead was to know the implications of Brexit to plan the necessary infrastructure, but there had been more government involvement over the last few weeks regarding border planning and the need to ensure swift movement of goods
- The cruise market was being expanded - with 46 cruise calls this year (approaching a record high) - and increased popularity for both day visits as well as cruise turnarounds including SAGA (for the first time this year) as well as Fred Olsen, Viking and CMV
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In response to questions the following additional information was given:

- It was confirmed that PCC had purchased the previous Eberhardt building, with the intention to lease to MMD shipping to use as their main office (which would have health and safety advantages for their administrative and account staff with easier access)
- It was acknowledged that clarity was being sought on border implications of exiting the European Union; whilst the government impression was that there was need for a pragmatic approach in getting the infrastructure in place for imports, the French government had indicated that if no deal was reached the rules for exports brought in from outside Europe would apply from Day 1 (= 29th March 2019). This could mean a 4 hour turnaround time for ships in France or Spain, whereas it was currently 1.5 hours impacting on PIP schedules.

ii) Richard Lee (Regulatory Services Manager) and Steve Bell (Environmental Health Team Leader)

Richard Lee explained the wide range of services and areas of responsibility that his department covered (some of which they were not the primary agency for).

Public health controls include:

- Infectious diseases on ships
- Ship sanitation
- Emergencies on ships
- De-infestation of pests on ships
- International health regulations
- Food safety on ships (including water and waste storage)

- Food borne diseases
- Legionella
- Norovirus
- Malaria and yellow fever
- Mosquito surveillance
- HIV/AIDS where there are concerns raised (in conjunction with Public Health England)

Import responsibilities include:

- Import controls - food of animal origin and food not of animal origin (mainly fruit) for which there is an inspection facility (although this is not a Border Inspection Post)
- Issuing certification for products - e.g. organic, harm in transit etc.
- Live animals and pets both of which have animal welfare issues regarding their transportation

Pollution from vessels and vehicles and waste materials was another area of responsibility, looking at the impact on air quality in the city.

Regarding shipping pollution it was asked if it was possible to differentiate port, leisure or Royal Naval vehicles for air quality testing? Whilst the vessels were not differentiated between, source apportionment studies did look at the likely source of pollution, including from shipping, and it was reported that over the last few decades vehicle pollution was the greatest concern for Portsmouth, although shipping is a contributor. Richard Lee believed that since the last detailed study in 2010 there had been a reduction in shipping movements there had been improvements due to technology and the fuels used on the ships. Therefore the contribution to Portsmouth pollution levels from PIP had lowered since 2010 (when it had contributed approx.10%). It was also reported that the shipping and vehicles used different fuel types, and for particulates Portsmouth is below the EU directive levels, whereas Nitrogen Dioxide levels present the greatest concern for the city (created primarily by vehicles). The height of the stacks on the ships helped with the dilution and dispersal and there is a sophisticated monitoring system in the city.

Mike Sellers further reported that there were 2015 Sulphur Regulations to comply with, so scrubbers had been fitted to the commercial ships. LNG was new technology being explored for new ferries (using gas which helps lower emissions). The ferry and cruise ships would use significant plug in power ('cold ironing') however they are only in port for their 1.5 hour turnarounds. As PIP is a major UK port managing over 2m tonnage the Port Director has a place on the Air Quality Planning Board in the city to contribute to the Air Quality Action Plan to reflect plans to reduce emissions at the port. He reiterated Richard's message that vehicle pollution is the biggest challenge,

which the port was also trying to tackle. Last year a new booking system had been brought in to space out HGV arrivals so they were not sitting with their engines idling for long periods of time or queuing on the M275, to help freight movement.

Day to Day Operations

Staff needed to be available to react to emergencies/incidents as well as providing a business support function, assisting the port in bringing in vessels, dealing with their cargo and passengers.

Financial Resources

The service provided was shaped around the income level and there had been a downturn due to the reduced banana consignments, which was a decrease in income of approximately £60k to the service. There was still the need to react to the unplanned emergencies. Their service was directly affected by the change in business operations, such as the new wind turbine products, as these were not a product Regulatory Services need to deal with.

The Regulatory Services team has 26 full time equivalent (FTE) posts with a range of skill sets. The Port requires a technical skill set and legal knowledge (currently EU law) so experienced officers are required here. As at October 2018 the equivalent of 0.6 FTE officers were assigned for the Port, with hours spread over the times that ships are in.

Members appreciated that this is a difficult area to recruit to/trained up/retain officers and it was dependent upon the level of produce coming in to the port, which was also linked with MMD business projections (and PCC support to their operations). In response Mike Sellers explained the need for PIP to diversify their business, which could be further explained by the new Business Development Manager, at a later meeting. For MMD the Vestas contract gave a better return than the Geest contract.

EU Exit/Brexit challenges

It was not known what requirements there would be for policing the border. There had been a lot more information from the government in recent weeks regarding if there was **no** agreement and becoming a hard border. Controls would need to be in place at the point of entry. There is a limited opportunity to predict the future requirements. If there are significant changes to PCC functions these may need to be implemented immediately. If checks are required for products coming through the port PCC will need to consider the resourcing implications for this function. There may need to be documentation checks or actual physical checks which will need greater involvement and personnel to do this. Members agreed that the implications of a hard border for Regulatory Services should remain high on the political agenda for the necessary resources to be in place.

The officers were thanked for their informative updates.

9. Date for next meeting (AI 5)

It was asked that the clerk to the panel contact all panel members to see if a later time in the day would encourage better attendance (to also suit witnesses).

The next meeting would be set to with members, with the witnesses Jane Singh and Ian Palacio being invited to attend.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.

Councillor George Fielding
Chair