

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

MINUTES of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 23 January 2019 at 4.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor George Fielding (in the Chair)

Councillors Tom Wood  
Frank Jonas BEM  
Robert New  
Scott Payter-Harris

#### **1. Apologies for absence (AI 1)**

Mike Sellers, Port Director, had sent his apologies for absence.

#### **2. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

Councillor Scott Payter-Harris declared that his wife is a manager at the Mary Rose Museum when there was mention of it briefly during the presentations, but this was non-prejudicial.

#### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 16 November 2018 (AI 3)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 November 2018 were approved as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Review of Portsmouth International Port (AI 4)**

As part of the review evidence was heard from the following witnesses:

##### **i) Ian Palacio, Business Development Manager**

Ian Palacio outlined the business plans for Portsmouth International Port (PIP). PIP has 2 parts, the cruise and ferry terminal and the conventional quays (with current tenant MMD). In recognising the reliance on Brittany Ferries (with whom there is a long-standing agreement) the aim was to attract additional customers to ensure a more sustainable business model. This would mainly be to gain more usage of the conventional quays.

Last year there had been 46 cruise calls this year 40 were planned - the dip was caused by SAGA which had one of its ships going out of service for a year. It was hoped that this season could be bolstered by other cruise calls.

Ian Palacio reported that as part of this aspiration AECOM Consultants had been appointed to look at how to improve the terminal building to be more inviting for both the cruise and ferry business, looking at the baggage handling and providing additional check in desks etc. A capital bid had been submitted

for the anticipated works which would take place over the next 3 years to help reach the target of 100 cruise calls.

In response to members' questions the following further information was provided:

- The timescale of the consultants' report was for this to be available was at the end of February, and then the work would have a phased implementation over 3 years to improve the terminal building and for further works which included the levelling of Berth 2 to make it more efficient and safer (due to take place during the winter of 2019/20)
- The work was necessary to attract business away from other ports so that the cruise companies would be confident of the full service provided at Portsmouth and the cruise market itself was increasing with new vessels being built and the fly-cruise market expanding from America. The size of the ships was important as whilst Southampton could berth over 300m Portsmouth was concentrating on vessels up to 240m, which included many of the luxury lines and the boutique ships were the right size to berth here. Further shipping analysis could be provided.
- The impact of Brexit was not known, however the turnaround business linked with UK tourism initiatives (and did not have the extra pressure of security checks) and there may be advantages for duty-free sales. There is a local Resilience Forum and a Brexit team working on possible implications at PIP to ensure that cargo and passenger traffic keeps moving and Mike Sellers would be giving an update at the next meeting, including contingency planning for traffic. It was noted that P&O, a large ferry company, had previously operated successfully from the port.

ii) Jane Singh Visitor Services and Development Manager (Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services, PCC)

Jane Singh explained her role, part of which was Destination Marketing including promoting PIP's cruise market, which linked in with the Portsmouth City Council Visitor Marketing Strategy 2017-2020 which has the following as its vision:

*Portsmouth is a city aspiring to great things. It has a culture-led regeneration strategy that encourages economic growth, innovation and enterprise and enhances the competitiveness of the city. The strategy sets out a vision for Portsmouth to be a great waterfront city, unique in its cultural identity, generating opportunities for economic prosperity and improving quality of life, developing an attractive sustainable destination for residents, visitors and investors.*

One of the strategy's primary objectives is for Portsmouth to become a city with a distinctive culture, established as a national and international destination. Within this objective there are five service priorities which form the foundations of the marketing strategy:

#### Service Priorities

- *Support and grow the visitor economy*
- *Develop Portsmouth to become a European city break destination with world- class attractions*
- *Improve the quality of the visitor experience*
- *Marketing and promotion of the city as a destination promoting its distinctive strengths and specialisms*
- *Develop the Portsmouth 'great waterfront city' brand to facilitate a unified and strong marketing message as a national, European and global destination, improving the perception of the city.*

Part of the international objectives with their strategy is specific to the cruise market:

*the cruise market which is growing in size in both Portsmouth and Southampton and provides opportunities to work with the International Ports, cruise forums and tour operators in encouraging passengers to spend the day in the city rather than venturing further afield.*

There is also work with Southampton Airport and specific airlines such as BMI, KLM and Flybe to attract domestic and European travellers to visit Portsmouth.

Marketing of the International Port starts with the selling point that Portsmouth is the UK's best connected port, and a key gateway for the UK. The port is included in all marketing collateral created by the PCC Visit Portsmouth team and distributed as part of all activity. It is featured on the Visit Portsmouth website and in the Travel Information pages in the Portsmouth Visitor Guides and Mini Guides. The Mini Guides are available in six languages and are distributed regionally and internationally at trade shows, international marketing events and at international ports.

#### **Brittany Ferries partnership work:**

Brittany Ferries have the Portsmouth destination brochures on their ships and have a destination film to play on board and at arrival ports, with a French version also available. As 85% of Brittany Ferries' passengers are UK travellers using the Port this gives us the opportunity to sell the city while they are on board, sailing out and back with a fantastic view of the city, and to encourage them to visit again in the future. Jane's team have also carried out talks on board the ferries about all things Portsmouth and are looking to repeat this around the 75 anniversary of D-Day in June 2019.

#### **The cruise market in Portsmouth**

In 2019 there are 40 cruise ships visiting Portsmouth, 19 of these are call-in cruises with potentially 6,500 passengers and crew spending the day in the city. The International Port is working hard to increase the capacity for cruise

liners in the Port as this is seen as a key area of growth for the future. The Port is also looking to increase visits by the current size of visiting ships and have attended Sea Trade events both in Miami and Portugal, promoting Portsmouth as a cruise destination.

During 2018 the PCC team worked in partnership with Shaping Portsmouth as members of a Cruise Group. The principal outcome of this has been the creation by the PCC Visit Portsmouth Team, incorporating feedback from trade, of a series of cruise itineraries. The itineraries offer a flavour of the world-class offer in Portsmouth and the possible themes available, to encourage cruise companies to think of and include Portsmouth when creating bookable excursions for their cruise guests. These itineraries have been circulated at a number of marketing events and meetings with cruise companies and ground handlers. Meetings have taken place with key ground handler companies Excursions and Intercruises and following this some bookings have been achieved (including Historic Dockyard).

The team was also working on targeting the independent traveller on cruise ships, who has not booked an excursion, to encourage them to spend time in the city while their cruise is in port. The International Port provides a free cruise shuttle bus for each cruise call (going to the D-Day Story in Southsea and some to the Hard) and the PCC Visit Portsmouth team provide a Greeter to meet cruise passengers. Destination partners also offer a range of discounts to city attractions, with vouchers for city attractions.

### **Cruise market in Southampton**

Using the same cruise itineraries and meetings with ground handlers and cruise companies, we are also targeting cruise ships visiting Southampton to encourage passenger visits into Portsmouth.

The PCC Visit Portsmouth team, working with Hampshire County Council, are currently involved in a Discover England Fund project. This project will maximise the economic impact of the rising number of international cruise passengers who already dock into Southampton and Plymouth. The partnership will target visitors from Germany, the Netherlands, the Nordics and the USA with a suite of bookable, commissionable leisure excursions encouraging visitors to step ashore and explore the ports and surrounding counties.

(A copy of the main Visitor Guide was circulated to panel members and is available to view on the website and Jane offered to circulate a short paper regarding the Discover England project)

In response to questions the following additional information was provided:

- Excursions are booked on board the cruise ships, and whilst PIP offers a free bus link with timetable in different languages (mainly used by German visitors these are not accompanied tours once the destination is reached, so are for the 20% independent travellers.

- 80% of guests take up on-board excursions, with many cruise lines, like Viking, running their own tours to the Portsmouth attractions including the Historic Dockyard and the D-Day Story.
- Crew members are also being encouraged to visit the city.
- The possibility of providing a water shuttle bus to Gunwharf is also being explored.
- The Communications Plan includes presence at trade shows around the country and internationally, with a poster campaign on the London Underground. The main international audience is Europe, America and China.
- For the D-Day 75 special events a Fred Olsen cruise ship would be visiting and Brittany Ferries would be taking veterans to and from France.

iii) Rachel McMinn, Marketing Communications Officer for PIP

Rachel McMinn reported on the marketing campaigns to raise Portsmouth's profile as a major continental port, with an enviable location with dramatic scenery for arrival to/departure from the city and harbour. The aims were:

- to secure a long term partner from established cruise operators
- to be the turnaround cruise port for the region
- secure Portsmouth's reputation for both continental and cruise markets reaching the local market

Focus groups would be taking place to ascertain how much local residents and those in the wider region (Chichester-Winchester) know about travelling from PIP for international holidays, and a campaign would then be launched.

Rachel was working with the cruise lines own PR teams to understand what cruise lines need for their guests to help expand the cruise business for Portsmouth through their social media sites and other marketing outlets. Brittany Ferries are also looking to attract more local customers (currently most of their customers come from west of London) and were involved in the Business Plan developments.

Portsmouth councillors will be invited to an open day by PIP and could be involved in the focus groups.

Rachel liaises with the cruise companies' PR teams and is working with Brittany Ferries to increase their profile locally for residents to make use of this facility. She also attends Cruise Britain events and sits on the British Port Association Communications meeting, and the Portsmouth profile is rising within trade media.

In response to questions the following additional information was provided:

- To encourage passengers to arrive in Portsmouth before their trips to extend their holidays locally, further discussions could take place with Brittany Ferries to include this within their booking systems. The PCC website included information on hotel availability and there are new hotels being built in the city. Stef Nienaltowski also reported on 2 hotels looking to provide a "sleep-park-cruise" offer (to be bussed to the port and back) which Shaping Portsmouth would be looking to assist with in the second half of the year.

iv) Stef Nienaltowski, Director of Shaping Portsmouth

Stef Nienaltowski explained the role of Shaping Portsmouth (the City Council is one of 31 funders, contributing 8%) running programmes in the city. Shaping Portsmouth brought together 11 organisations to look at the cruise passenger opportunities. He is currently co-chair of the Shaping Portsmouth Cruise Passenger Programme with Mike Sellers.

17 cruise ships call into port with 60 brochured tours - 59 of which took the passengers out of the city, with the other 1 being a walking tour of the Historic Dockyard. Therefore they were working on building a set of premiere tours (aiming to be in brochures by 2020), working with the 2 major shipping agents. He was already receiving good feedback on the creation of 8 multi-centre heritage branded tours of the city. Added to the "a la carte" tours was Wet Wheels would provide disabled passengers a tour of the Solent.

The aim was to attract more visitors by showing the value of these tours, which show the history of the city. There was also the need to ensure a seamless approach of disembarking for a great passenger experience. Some passengers want to go back to their ship for lunch and others will eat locally. The working group felt that both ends of the market (high end and budget) can be catered for.

One of the tours offered was to get exercise at Forts Widley and Purbrook. The other tours included the Mary Rose Museum, Gunwharf, Hovertravel, the Emmirates Spinnaker Tower, the cathedral. Approaches were also being made to the Royal Navy for their inclusion. The work of the group showed enthusiasm and passion for promoting the city's attractions and heritage.

In response to members' questions the following information was added:

- Would Wet Wheels be able to pick up passengers from Gunwharf? This may have customs/passport control issues.
- Ian Palacio reported that accommodating passengers via pick-ups were being looked and a water bus/taxi was being explored. The 3 main excursion companies currently worked with the foreign cruise-lines.

All those who had given presentations were thanked for their participation by the Chair.

**5. Date of next meeting (AI 5)**

This was confirmed as Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February at 4.30pm in the Civic Offices.

The meeting concluded at 5.30 pm.

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Councillor George Fielding  
Chair