HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

Thursday, 30th July, 2020

(The Special Meeting was held in the Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Kingston upon Hull)

PRESENT: -

Councillors Brady (Chair), Vickers (Deputy Chair), Briggs, Chambers, Chaytor, Fareham and Pantelakis.

IN ATTENDANCE: -

Laurence Dettman (Chief Port Health Inspector), Annemarie Hamil (Chief Administrative Officer), Alison Gill (Senior Finance Officer, Hull City Council) and Paul Rawcliffe (Senior Democratic Services Officer, Hull City Council).

APOLOGIES: -

Councillor Handley.

| Minute **No.** | Business |
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| 1742 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**  No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items that follow below. |
| 1743 | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE, 2020**  **Agreed** - That, the minutes of the meeting of this Authority, held on 10th June, 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair. |
| 1744 | **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20**  The Treasurer submitted a report which provided the Board with the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 and Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2019/20) for consideration.  At the end of each financial year, the Authority was required to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return which was audited by the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP. It was a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, 2015, that the Annual Governance Statement was considered and approved prior to the Accounting Statements.  An audit had recently been undertaken by Hull City Council’s Internal Audit Section in accordance with the Audit Plan. This examined systems and procedures that were in place for the management of Hull and Goole Port Health Authority. Internal Audit’s opinion was that the systems in operation within the Authority were good. The Annual Governance Statement had subsequently been reviewed and updated in line with the current system of internal controls.  Discussion took place around the annual appraisal of Officers which had been delayed because of the impact of Covid-19, and the regular contact made with Officers during the Covic-19 pandemic.  **Agreed** - That the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 be approved. |
| 1745 | **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20**  The Treasurer submitted a report which included the Authority’s Annual Statement of Accounts; provided an analysis of the Authority’s financial activity for the year ended 31st March, 2020, and presented Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2019/20), for consideration.  At the end of each financial year, the Hull and Goole Port Health Authority was required to produce and approve a set of financial statements and associated disclosures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, 2015. The regulations required that the statements be approved by the Authority before 30th June, immediately following the year end. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, that deadline had been extended to 31st July. The Statement of Accounts was used as a basis for completing Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March, 2020.  Discussion took place around the process for the collection of the charges for inspections undertaken by the Authority.  **Agreed** - That the Accounting Statements for 2019/20 be approved. |
| 1746 | **POST EU/UK TRANSITION PERIOD BORDER CHECKS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AUTHORITY**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which provided the Board with an update on the serious implications of recent Government announcements regarding new border checks at UK ports from 1st January, 2021, and the actions he had taken to date on those matters. Attached to the report were notes of the BDPG Industry Stakeholder event, held on 13th July, 2020, which had been attended by a representative of the Association of Port Health Authorities.  The Chief Port Health Inspector paid particular attention to the Government’s announcement made on 12th June 2020, and the ongoing concerns and actions arising from that announcement. He added that his main concern was that, while a number of phased deadlines, from 1st January, 2021, had been announced for the post-transition period imported food checks by Port Health Authorities, the Government had not (i) issued detailed guidance on the changes; (ii) provided information on the proposed funding arrangements, or (iii) how that funding would be made available to Port Health Authorities. That uncertainty presented major challenges for the Authority in being able to plan for those changes.  Discussion took place around the lack of a recruitment pool of suitably qualified people that could be employed to undertake the new responsibilities; how any additional finances would be provided through a bidding process; how any additional finances would be passed on to the Port Health Authorities; that the Government needed to fully fund the changes so that the cost was not passed on to the Local Authorities in the form of an increased levy to the Board; the Government’s proposal for additional Port Health Officers; the need for the Chief Port Health Inspector to provide scenarios to the Board for the future arrangements based on the information currently available; how the current situation could affect the 2021/22 levies; how the changes could impact on the work patterns of current employees; the potential need for increased office space for the Authority, and the need for clear direction from the Government on a national and local basis across all aspects of the changes.   **Agreed** –   1. That the report be noted; 2. that the Board supports the views of the Chief Port Health Inspector and calls on the Government to issue, at the earliest opportunity, the necessary guidance for the changes to border checks, including details of how those changes will be funded, to enable all Port Health Authorities to plan for those changes; 3. that the Chief Port Health Inspector submits a report to the next meeting of the Board appraising the various scenarios of the impact of the changes based on the information currently available, to enable the Board to decide on the best way forward; 4. that the Chief Port Health Inspector writes to all the region’s MPs expressing the Board’s concerns on this matter, including a request to nominate an MP to lead the promotion of those views in Parliament, and 5. that the Board be informed of developments, and additional meetings be called as and when necessary. |
| 1747 | **URGENT BUSINESS  Agreed** – That the following matter, 2025 UK Border Strategy – Public Consultation, be considered as urgent business as the consultation document had been received after the agenda for this meeting had been published, and responses to the consultation had to be submitted to the Government by 28th August, 2020, which was before the next meeting of the Board. |
| 1748 | **2025 UK BORDER STRATEGY – PUBLIC CONSULTATION** The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted the Government’s 2025 UK Border Strategy – Public Consultation document. The consultation sought the views and expertise of stakeholders to help develop the 2025 UK Border Strategy. This would ensure that the Government and industry were able to work in partnership together to deliver a world class border.  Discussion took place around the need for any documentation resulting from the consultation to be written in plain English and easily understandable; the need to provide clear processes that lead to clear outcomes; the need to develop systems that would enable the majority of the paperwork to be completed before arrival in port; a clarity of purpose around ‘who does what’, and the importance that the new IT systems were fit for purpose as the new processes were heavily dependent on those systems.  **Agreed** –   1. That the consultation document be noted; 2. that the comments detailed above form the basis of the Chief Port Health Inspector’s response to the consultation, and 3. that the Board be informed of developments on this matter. |