HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

9th June 2021

(Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Kingston upon Hull)

PRESENT: -

Councillors Brady (Chair), Vickers (Deputy Chair), Briggs, Chambers, Chaytor, Collinson, 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 Louise Hawkins (Democratic Services Officer, Hull City Council).

| Minute **No.** | Business |
| --- | --- |
| 1770 | **ELECTION OF CHAIR**  **Moved by Councillor Fareham and seconded by Councillor Chaytor that**  Councillor Brady be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.  **Motion carried.** |
| 1771 | **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**  **Moved by Councillor Fareham and seconded by Councillor Briggs that**  Councillor Vickers be elected as Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.  **Motion carried.** |
| 1772 | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received from Councillors Coultish and Handley. |
| 1773 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**  No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items that follow below. |
| 1774 | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22ND MARCH 2021**  **Agreed** - That, the minutes of the meeting of this Authority, held on 22nd March 2021, having been printed and circulated, with the amendment that Councillor Collinson was in attendance remotely, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair. |
| 1775 | **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**  **Agreed –**   1. That the Chief Port Health Inspector be appointed to the Local Resilience Forum; 2. That the Chief Port Health Inspector be appointed to the Humber Authorities Chief Environmental Health Officers’ Group, and 3. That Councillor Pantelakis and the Chief Port Health Inspector be appointed to the Humber Port Welfare Committee. |
| 1776 | **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**  The Senior Finance Officer presented a report which presented members of the Authority with the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.  **Agreed –** that the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 be approved. |
| 1777 | **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21**  The Senior Finance Officer submitted a report which presented the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 for approval.  The members were informed that –   1. The accounts had been fluid over the past year and had included the Government funding of around £530,000 and the proposed new staffing structure. It had been difficult to compare the actuals as there had been additional spending on training and uniforms and equipment for newly recruited staff. 2. The income received was lower than expected due to the delay of the new EU food inspection charging regime and the impact of Covid-19. The Accounts reflected a very unusual set of circumstances for the financial year.   The Chief Port Health Inspector reported that he had received a request through DEFRA to estimate any shortfall for the 2021/22 financial year as it was expected that there would be another bidding process for Government funding.  A member queried whether the Authority was expecting to see the same loss in income year on year. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that the Authority was expecting an increase from charges for the new border checks, which had been delayed by six months. It was not yet known what the actual levels of income would be. It was forecast that the Government funding would be exhausted due to the recruitment of additional staff that was required. A pragmatic approach to the recruitment had been adopted, as the Chief Port Health Inspector had anticipated there would be delays to the implementation of the border checks, which had reduced the overspend for 2020/21.  It was acknowledged that it had been a challenging financial year and the Members were content with the assurance that had been provided by the officers in relation to the Accounts for 2020/21.  The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that he anticipated that the Authority would be financially better placed once the charges for the border control checks were in place.  **Agreed –** that the Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21 be approved. |
| 1778 | **EU TRANSITION & UK BORDER READINESS UPDATE**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which provided an update on developments, continuing challenges and progress made since the last meeting.  The Members were informed that –   1. There would be no custom holds until 1 January 2022 and from that date full physical checks would take place. 2. The construction of the Border Control Posts was fully underway. The Chief Port Health Inspector would undertake site visits once the internal work had started. 3. The new border regimes would be reliant on several IT systems which would need to interface with each other. There was reasonable confidence that the IT systems would work as they were being used at a basic level currently. The Chief Port Health Inspector had, via Defra, asked the Government whether there were any manual back up plans in the event that the IT systems failed. 4. The Authority was engaged in a recruitment process and there was currently an advertisement for veterinarian surgeon posts. The Authority had recently recruited a Senior Port Health Inspector and two Port Health Inspectors. 5. Recruitment of several Port Health Support Officers would soon commence. 6. It was expected that the Authority would be able to start charging for documentary checks from 1st October 2021. 7. The Authority was aware of the risks in relation to not being able to fully recruit and that the Government funding was finite.   A member queried whether the Authority would be involved in the inspection of exported goods. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that once the veterinarian surgeon posts had been filled the Authority would have the ability to issue the relevant export health certificates on a discretionary and chargeable basis.  **Agreed –** that the report be noted. |
| 1779 | **PROPOSAL TO EXTEND TEMPORARY VARIATION FOR APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL HOURS PAYMENTS**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which proposed that the Board approved a further temporary extension for additional hours payments.  The Board queried how much the payment of additional hours had cost the Authority to date. The Chief Administrative Officer explained that the cost during 2020-21 financial year had been £21,000 of which £8,500 had been covered by the grant received from Central Government. It was expected that the arrangement would not be required once the newly appointed staff had been fully trained.  Members of the Board acknowledged the need for the current arrangement however they did not want to see it become normal practice to be paid for additional hours. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that he did not anticipate the need for the arrangement to be used beyond December 2021.  The Chief Administrative Officer reported that most of the payments had been to part time staff who had worked additional hours.  **Agreed –** that the Board agrees to extend the temporary arrangement with a review at the December 2021 meeting. |
| 1780 | **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY – ANNUAL STATEMENT**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which requested the Board to formally endorse the Health and Safety Policy and the Annual  Statement by the Chief Port Health Inspector.  The Chief Port Health Inspector reported that there had been no reportable accidents during the year 2020/21.  **Agreed –** that the Health and Safety Policy and the Annual Statement be endorsed. |
| 1781 | **QUARTERLY UPDATE FEBRUARY 2021 TO APRIL 2021**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which detailed the quarterly summary of the Authority’s work in respect of inspections, notifications, and investigations undertaken during the period February 2021 to April 2021.  The Board was informed that the Authority had seen a challenging increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and outbreaks on ships and it was suggested that this was largely a result of increased testing.  The Board queried what happened to individuals who tested positive for Covid-19. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that each case was different, and it was not always possible for foreign crew members to be sent home. It was possible for ferry staff to isolate on board the vessel and there was a hotel in Rotterdam for individuals who had tested positive.  It was noted that there had been complaints received from crew members in relation to the water supply standards on board their vessel. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that whilst this was unusual in modern times, as ship supplies are generally well managed, but ships water supplies always involves a storage tank and could include water from anywhere in the world and present a risk if not well managed. In this case our officers sampled the water and confirmed that the supply was bacterially contaminated.  The Chief Port Health Inspector reported that the Authority was receiving a significant number of requests for information about importing foodstuffs now that the UK was no longer part of the European Union. There was some evidence of trade denial, in relation to the forthcoming new EU border control checks, because of the length of the delays in implementation. However, the Authority was relaying the message that it would indeed be happening, and that it was vital that EU exporters and their UK representatives fully engage with UK border preparedness and readiness. |