HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

8th September 2021

(Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Kingston upon Hull)

PRESENT: -

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

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 |
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| 1782 | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received from Councillor Pantelakis. |
| 1783 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**  No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items that follow below. |
| 1784 | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2021**  **Agreed -** That, the minutes of the meeting of this Authority, held on 22nd March 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair. |
| 1785 | **BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22**  The Senior Finance Officer submitted a report which provided Members with an update on the Authority’s spending to the end of July 2021 compared to the approved budget and highlighted any anticipated variations to budget for the full year.  The Members were informed that –   1. That there had been various changes and unknown factors since the budget had been set and that the current position was not a true reflection of the Authority’s finances going forward. 2. It was likely that the budget uncertainty would continue, however it was not considered that the Authority was at financial risk. There was a potential bidding process to underwrite the additional costs that had been incurred and the Authority would receive an income through the fees it would charge to undertake the new border checks.   The Members discussed the following matters –   1. Whether the Authority would have sufficient income to cover the forecast overspend. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that Port Health Authorities were lobbying the Government for funding to underwrite overspends which related to the new border control checks. If the funding was not made available there would be a sizeable gap in the Authority’s funds, and 2. Whether there was a need to inform the constituent Local Authorities that there was a possibility that the Authority could experience some financial difficulties this year. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that he did not think that would be necessary as it this point the risks were not imminently serious. He will monitor the financial situation very closely over coming weeks and report developments to Members.   **Agreed –** that the report be noted. |
| 1786 | **QUARTERLY SUMMARY MAY 2021 TO JULY 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 May 2021 to July 2021.  The Members were informed that the Authority was still receiving a significant number of notifications of covid-19 cases on-board vessels. A member of the Board asked whether there were any hotspots for covid-19 cases. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that seafarers had not had ready access to the vaccine. The UK had now made the vaccine available, free of charge, at its ports.  **Agreed –** that the report be noted. |
| 1787 | **EU TRANSITION AND UK BORDER READINESS UPDATE**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which provided the Authority with an update on the developments and progress made in relation to EU transition and UK Border readiness.  The Members were informed that –   1. The Port Health Authority would be using digital means to undertake the new UK border checks on EU products of animal origin and high risk food not of animal origin; 2. The charges for the checks would not be applied during the first three months and that the income that would have been secured during this period of time was covered by the funding bid that had been submitted to DEFRA; 3. It would be approximately November before the Port Health Authority would have access to the new Border Control Posts at Killingholme and Hull; 4. The Port Health Authority wanted to minimise the impact and delays at the ports and there was a plan to pre-clear consignments. The vessels arriving at the ports were mostly overnight ferry crossings and this would need to be factored in to how the Authority operated; 5. It would be naive to expect that there would be no delays following the introduction of a whole new UK checking regime; 6. There was a heavy reliance on the new IT systems. The systems were being refined however the Port Health Authorities had been assured that the systems would be ready for use by 1January 2022; 7. The recruitment process had gone well however it was expected that further recruitment would need to take place as the levels of resources required was not yet known and by January 2022 there would be a clearer picture, and 8. The working pattern had not been finalised. There was a 24-hour import pre-notification period although traders could apply for a reduction. It was intended that staff would work seven days per week on a two-shift pattern.   It was suggested that a visit to the new Border Control Posts would be of benefit to members of the Board. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that it would be useful for the Board to visit the site at Killingholme first and he will endeavour to arrange this.  A member of the Board asked if the Government had a contingency plan in place in the event that the new IT systems failed. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that the communication with the IT Team had been very good over the past two years. A contingency plan had been requested but had not yet been provided. A request to have the power to wave goods through in the event of a failure had been suggested to Government.  Members of the Board expressed concern about the impact of the new border checks on the consumer as there was a possibility they could lead to increased prices for goods.  **Agreed –**   1. That the report be noted, and 2. That a site visit to the Border Post site at Killingholme is arranged for members of the Board. |
| 1788 | **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**  **Agreed –** that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public (including the Press) be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, minute 1789, on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information an individual and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. |
| 1789 | **EU TRANSITION AND UK BORDER READINESS UPDATE – APPENDIX 1**  **Agreed –** that the appendix be noted. |