HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

Wednesday 10th June 2020

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

PRESENT: -

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

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).

APOLOGIES: -

None.

| Minute **No.** | Report **No.** | Business |
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| 1736 |  | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**  No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items that follow below. |
| 1737 |  | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2020**  A Member of the Board expressed concern that no action had been agreed in relation to minute 1730 and the issues around the continuing operation of P&O Ferries. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that following the meeting discussions had taken place with the ferry operator however that was prior to lockdown and the situation had changed significantly since then.  **Agreed** - That, the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair. |
| 1738 |  | **ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2020-2021**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which presented the Authority’s Service Plan 2020-2021 for approval. The Food Service Plan 20-21 would be presented to the Board at its meeting in September 2020.  **Agreed –** that that the Annual Service Plan 2020-2021 be approved. |
| 1739 |  | **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY - ANNUAL STATEMENT**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted the Health and Safety Policy for endorsement by the Board.  The Board was informed that there had been no accidents or serious incidents to report.  **Agreed –** that the Health and Safety Policy and the Annual Statement by the Chief Port Health Inspector be endorsed by the Board. |
| 1740 |  | **QUARTERLY SUMMARY REPORT NOVEMBER 2019- JANUARY 2020**  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 2020 to April 2020.  The Board discussed the increase in the number of horses being transported and whether staff were provided with PPE when boarding vessels. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that the reason for the increase in horses on board vessels was not known and that since the lockdown had begun, officers had not boarded any vessels. The issuing of certificates had been undertaken remotely, however PPE would be used in emergency situations.  **Agreed –** That the report be noted. |
| 1741 |  | **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which provided the Board with a summary of the background to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the impact of the Authority to date.  The Board was informed that the report provided a brief timeline of the events that had occurred since January 2020. The situation had moved swiftly. The impact on the Authority’s finances had been significant as both income and expenditure had been affected. It was confirmed that the Authority had applied for the relevant Government grant funding.  A discussion took place around the current local funding arrangements of the Authority and Members expressed concern that the arrangement would not be sufficient to undertake any additional EU imported food duties that the Authority would be responsible for following the end of the transitional period at the end of the year, following UK withdrawal from the EU in January this year. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that following this meeting he would be meeting with representatives from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to discuss the potential impacts of Brexit on Port Health Authorities. However, at this point Port Health Authorities were not clear on the checks that they would be expected perform and how they would be resourced.  Concerns were being raised by all Port Health Authorities, particularly in relation to finances and infrastructure. It was confirmed that should Port Health Authorities become funded by Central Government alone, their constitutions would change entirely.  The Board expressed concern in relation to Port Health Authorities becoming centrally funded and expressed the view that they would not be in support of this. Members felt that it was important that they remained a local arrangement with local democratic input.  It was suggested that an additional meeting of the Board could be required. However, Members were clear that such a meeting would only be agreed if a decision was required urgently.  A Member of the Board suggested that if the Authority was to undertake additional imported food duties it would need significant extra funding and additional staff to be in place very quickly. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that securing additional officers could be problematic and the impact of Brexit could potentially be enormous.  A discussion took place around the current position and Members queried whether any of the Government agencies had contact with the relevant Ministers by which they could raise the issues being faced by Port Health Authorities. The Chief Port Health Inspector confirmed that he would raise the concerns expressed by the Board at his meeting with DEFRA.  **Agreed –**   1. That the report be noted, and 2. That Members of the Board be kept informed of the situation and that an additional Board meeting takes place should any urgent decisions need to be taken. |