HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

16th March 2022

(Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Kingston upon Hull)

PRESENT: -

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

IN ATTENDANCE: -

Laurence Dettman (Chief Port Health Inspector), Alison Gill (Senior Finance Officer, Hull City Council) and Louise Hawkins (Democratic Services Officer, Hull City Council).

| Minute **No.** | Business |
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| 1796 | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received from Councillors Briggs and Pantelakis. |
| 1797 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**  No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items that follow below. |
| 1798 | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH DECEMEBER 2021**  **Agreed -** That, the minutes of the meeting of this Authority, held on 8th, December 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair. |
| 1799 | **BUDGET MONITORING 2021-2022**  The Treasurer and the Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which informed members of the Authority’s spending to the end of January 2022 compared to the approved budget and highlights any anticipated variations to budget for the full year.  The Senior Finance Officer explained that the overall budget for the current financial year was on target. The grant received from Defra had covered the overspends and there had been a slight reduction in income. There were no issues to report.  It was confirmed that there would be a small draw on the levy fund.  The Board raised the following matters –   1. That when the Authority had budgeted for employees it had expected to spend over £900,000 however that amount had not been spent. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that on Government advice the Authority had not recruited to the expected staffing levels due to the delay in the introduction of the border control checks, and 2. Whether the Chief Port Health Inspector expected that the Authority’s income would increase once the border checks were taking place? The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that the Authority would be able to charge importers for undertaking the border checks from July 2022, which would generate income. The Authority had applied for additional Defra grant funding, which would cover any shortfalls in the 3-month period before the border checks were introduced. 3. It was also confirmed that the Authority did not have to pay rent for use of the port Border Control Posts, which was a standard approach across the UK.   **Agreed –** that the report be noted. |
| 1800 | **EU TRANSITION AND UK BORDER READINESS UPDATE**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which provided the Authority with an update on developments and progress made in relation to EU transition and UK Border readiness.  Members were informed that –   1. The Chief Port Health Inspector had been assured that there would be no further delays to the introduction of the new phased UK border checks, starting with checks on meat and meat products from 1 July 2022; 2. It had been confirmed that checks on dairy products would be introduced from 1 September 2022 and fish and fishery products would commence in November 2022; 3. It was expected to be towards the end of the year before the Authority was on an even keel in relation to its finances. It was expected that there would be sufficient levels of income received from charges on importers, once the checks started to take place, and the Authority’s reliance on the local authorities should reduce. There would need to be a settling-in period and the Authority would need some time to evaluate and rationalize its position once the checks had been established. 4. A visit to the new Killingholme Border Control Post had taken place. The site was extensive and modern. It was confirmed that training and familiarisation visits would take place for staff. Another visit had been arranged to take place which all Members were welcome to attend; 5. The new facility in Hull was almost finished and a date to visit had not yet been arranged; 6. The Authority had submitted a further funding bid to Defra for £820,000 to cover the costs during the first three months of the year for existing additional staff and staff yet to be recruited before the border checks commenced.   The Board queried whether the Chief Port Health Inspector could confirm who was responsible for paying for the inspection once the charging was introduced. Members were informed that port health charges were invoiced to whoever was responsible for the load; the fee would escalate if there were issues with the goods. Port fees could also be incurred, for example, if the goods had to be moved or stored. There would also be fees if any goods needed to be submitted for analysis. There were ongoing discussions about introducing a “trusted trader scheme”. The Authority had a back-office finance system and there were some companies who were using a depositing scheme.  **Agreed –** that the report be noted. |
| 1801 | **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which informed the Board of the outcome of a review of the Authority’s Risk Management Strategy and Risk Analysis.  The Board was informed that the Risk Management Strategy was reviewed annually. There were some risks which remained in the list from year to year however there had been some new risks added this year which included employee vacancies.  A discussion took place around the Authority’s website and that it should include a list of the Board members.  **Agreed –**   1. That the Board approves the revised Risk Management Strategy and Risk Analysis, and 2. That following the Annual General Meeting the Authority’s website is amended to include the details of the Board members. |
| 1802 | **SHIFT ALLOWANCE**  The Chief Port Health Inspector submitted a report which requested the Board to approve the payment of a salary enhancement to shift workers to reflect the weekend, public holiday and anti-social aspects of their work.  The Board was informed that the Authority had appointed Port Health Support Officers in readiness for the introduction of the border control checks. The shipping industry worked seven days per week, and it had been a challenge to put together a workable shift pattern. The staff had been consulted and they had indicated that they preferred to work longer shifts and have two days off during the week. The Chief Port Health Inspector had consulted other similar sized Port Health Authorities about their approach to shift patterns and allowances. It was confirmed that the proposal to introduce a shift allowance had been discussed with Human Resources at Hull City Council.  The Board discussed the proposal, and it was acknowledged that shift allowances for weekend working was standard in the industry.  A Member of the Board queried how many weekends officers were expected to work during a month. The Chief Port Health Inspector explained that one month officers would be expected to work two weekends and the following month one weekend. The shift pattern was complex and annual leave entitlements had to be included. The rota had been planned for up to 12 months in advance.  **Agreed –** that the Board supports and approves the ‘industry norm’ average payment of 14% of salary to Port Health Support Officers with effect from the date of commencement of the BCP shift rota. |
| 1803 | **QUARTERLY SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2021 TO JANUARY 2022**  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 November 2021 to January 2022.  **Agreed –** that the report. |
| 1804 | **RETIREMENT**  The Chief Port Health Inspector advised the Board that Councillor Brady was to retire at the forthcoming local elections. He thanked Councillor Brady for his dedication and support as Chair of the Authority for 20 years.  Councillor Brady said that it had been a pleasure to Chair the Authority and he thanked the staff and Board Members for their hard work and commitment. |