

Chapter 11 Commerce

Guiding Principles:

Chapter 4 details all the guiding principles relevant to the overall management of the Harbour. Whilst all should be given some consideration the following are of particular relevance to commerce.

Key Guiding Principle numbers: 1, 5, 18 and 19.

11.1 The Port

11.1.1 Introduction

Poole Harbour has been a centre for maritime trade since at least the Iron Age. Today the port of Poole is an important local and regional asset, which currently offers direct and indirect employment to over 600 people as well as making a significant contribution to the economy of the area. In terms of turnover Poole is the 6th largest Trust Port in the country and is not subsidised in any way. Commercial port operations are responsible for around 90% of the income of the port authority and any surplus monies are used to maintain the Harbour for the benefit of all users.

The future success of the port relies in part on a flexible approach from the Harbour Commissioners who need to be able to adapt to the changing requirements of the commercial operators that use the port. Improved road and rail links both locally and regionally are also key to the future security of the commercial port and initiatives such as the second Poole lifting bridge are vital to the continued development of the area. The regeneration schemes associated with Poole's second lifting bridge have however reduced significantly the length of deep water frontage within the town of Poole.

Transportation issues around the Harbour are considered further in Chapter 12.

11.1.2 Channel Deepening

In order to secure the Harbour as a viable port for use by large ferry operators, the Middle Ship and Swash Channels underwent a Capital Dredge to increase their depth to 7.5m below Chart Datum (CD). The work took place between November 2005 and March 2006 and was jointly commissioned by Poole Harbour Commissioners and the Borough of Poole. Under the Harbour Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 the project required a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out to investigate the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the scheme and Coast Protection Act 1949 and Food and Environmental Protection Act 1985 consents were obtained before work could commence.

Around 1.8 million m³ of material was removed with over half of this being used beneficially for beach replenishment at Poole, Bournemouth and Swanage. In line with the Shoreline Management Plan any suitable material that needs to be maintenance dredged from the Approach Channel to the Port is continuing to be used to replenish the beaches.

The success of this scheme means that the port is more versatile in the type of vessels that it can accommodate and now has the capacity to increase activity and therefore profitability in the long-term.

11.1.3 Ro-Ro Traffic

Commercial ferry operators currently run regular passenger and freight services to Santander, Cherbourg, St Malo and the Channel Islands. The continued custom of ferry companies is key to the Port's economic future. The channel deepening works have ensured that the port can accommodate larger vessels and also attract the custom of other ferry and cruise line operators.



11.1.4 Conventional Cargo

Poole is a major destination for bulk cargo imports and the port receives imports of steel, timber, bricks, fertiliser, grain, aggregates and palletised traffic. Export cargoes include clay, sand, fragmented steel and grain. Poole Harbour Commissioners employ a team of stevedores who handle most of the 500,000 metric tonnes of conventional cargo leaving and entering the port each year. Improvements to facilities over the years mean that a variety of different cargoes can now be handled and stored which offers more economic security for the future.

As well as cargo operations managed by the Commissioners, the commercial quay is currently home to an independent marine aggregate. The commercial quay is also currently home to an independent marine aggregate dredging operation which discharges cargoes of sand and gravel. The Poole Local Plan recognises the importance of the Port as a vital resource in terms of providing an opportunity for aggregate handling. Hence any development that would hinder the port's ability to provide a deep water quay frontage for the handling of aggregates will be resisted by the local council.



11.2 Other Significant Industries

As well as commercial operations directly associated with the port, the Harbour and its shores also support many other industries of differing scales. A number of local companies, boatyards, marinas and sail lofts are located around the Harbour and offer services to both commercial and recreational mariners. The Harbour is also home to a large commercial fishing fleet which supplies local and overseas markets with high quality fish and shellfish, (see Chapter 8). Charter angling and dive boats operate from the quay along with a number of passenger boats, which offer sightseeing trips to visitors during the summer months.

A builder of luxury motor yachts for both domestic and international clients operates from deepwater quay frontages as well as from a number of factory sites around the area.

The Royal Marines have an established base at Hamworthy and much of their assault craft training is carried out in and around the Harbour, while the RNLI has established its National Headquarters and Training College at a waterfront facility in Holes Bay. The complete range of operational lifeboats can be observed at Poole, both at evaluation trials and post refit trials and undergoing work up programmes with their operational crews, prior to going on station at their appointed places.



Europe's largest onshore oil field is also situated within the Harbour. Drilling platforms on Furzey Island and Goathorn Peninsular use extended reach drilling techniques to exploit oil deposits under Poole Bay which are distributed from the Harbour via subterranean pipelines to Southampton Water. Production from the field peaked during the 1990s at around 100,000 barrels per day but current production stands at between 20-30,000 barrels per day. In order to support their operations a small, specialised terminal adjacent to the main Port is used to ferry materials and personnel to Furzey Island. The Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Plan, 1999, sets out policies relevant to the extraction of hydrocarbons in Dorset both for existing and potential sites. They identify the need to minimise the impact of such operations through sound environmental management and the use of existing infrastructure by new developments.

Overall it is important that existing waterfront sites are available for appropriate marine related industries in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Notes as well as regional and local statutory plans. These industries contribute towards the economic and social health of the Harbour but there is also a need to ensure that strategies, initiatives, project and plans are developed and implemented in accordance with due planning process and the Habitat Regulations. The Harbour and its hinterland also support an important tourism industry, which brings substantial revenue to the region and there is a need to maintain a balance between the Harbour as a working area and its promotion as a tourist destination.