

## 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.

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 m<sup>3</sup> of material was removed with over half of this being used beneficially for beach replenishment at Poole, Bournemouth and Swanage.

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 Cherbourg, St Malo and the Channel Islands. Ferry companies are the principle operators at the port and their continued custom is key to its 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, an independent oil company also operates a berth and storage facilities at the port. 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.

## Chapter 12 Transport Connections

### 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 transport connections.

Key Guiding Principle numbers: 1, 5, 20 and 21.

### 12.1 Overview

Poole Town and Harbour are relatively well connected to the main road network and are also served by national rail links, with a principle route connecting the town with London and Southampton to the east and Weymouth to the west. The Port itself is served by a branch line that connects to the main rail network. Transportation by ship has to some extent been covered in Chapter 11, however it is also important to consider the wider transport infrastructure that supports the Port and the surrounding hinterland. With predicted growth in population, combined with increasing visitor numbers and the possibility of higher volumes of port traffic following channel deepening, it is essential that local plans and policies continue to recognise the need for a robust transportation network to support the local area.

The Poole Local Plan and the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Structure Plan, both acknowledge and address the need to renew and develop the road and rail links for the region for the socio and economic benefit to the local inhabitants and the port itself. Both these plans support the Government's strategy for sustainable transport development, PPG13, which considers the need for integration of different modes, including the transfer of freight transport to shipping where possible. Local authorities are encouraged to promote the role of ports by encouraging access to them by rail and road. However it is acknowledged that the benefits of securing the economic prosperity of the port need to be balanced against environmental and recreational considerations with regard to due planning process and Habitat Regulations.

### 12.2 Strategic Highway Network

#### 12.2.1 Background

Traffic in Dorset is forecast to grow by around 20% by the year 2011 and while it is recognised that the building of new roads can be counterproductive, local plans do highlight that some improvements to the strategic highway network are necessary. This is particularly true where there are strong economic reasons such as the movement of goods to and from the port and the regeneration of areas such as Hamworthy. The local road network also needs to be able to absorb and support the increasing numbers of tourists that visit the region each year and ensure that the Harbour and Port are as accessible as possible. The general inadequacies of current road link has to some extent hampered the Port's trading capability, where hauliers have tended to use more accessible routes to other ports in the Solent.

#### 12.2.2 Links to the Port

There are currently major congestion problems caused by the absence of an adequate route between the A3049 dual carriageway in Poole and the A31 trunk road. By limiting access to Poole and the port the economic viability of the Borough is compromised and the local council is therefore committed to securing the A31 Poole link through the Local Structure and Transport Plan process.

There is also a proposed road network for the Hamworthy area, which contains a number of new road links, including a replacement A350 route to the port. This will allow traffic flows on Blandford Road to be greatly reduced by traffic management.

### 12.2.3 Poole Bridge Regeneration Initiative

Significant regeneration of land either side of Back Water Channel is proposed to enable land that is currently vacant or under utilised to deliver new homes, employment opportunities, community facilities and a second Harbour crossing. Approximately 25 hectares of land is identified for development and the catalyst is a new bridge, “Twin Sails”, that is being promoted by the Borough of Poole. The new bridge will address the access issues that currently hinder reliable road movements between Hamworthy and the Poole Town side of the channel and will considerably improve communication links to the Port of Poole. The new crossing will form part of the primary transport route.

“Twin Sails” will be a lifting bridge that will operate in conjunction with the existing Poole Bridge to ensure whenever possible that there is one bridge open to road traffic. There may be occasions when both bridges will need to be opened together to facilitate the safe movement of vessels. This situation is provided for in the Transport and Works Act Order which allows the Harbour Master to direct that both bridges be lifted to ensure maritime safety is not compromised. A variable messaging system will be put in place to direct road traffic to whichever bridge is available for crossing while measures to ensure the safe navigation of boats through the two bridges will be implemented.



## 12.3 Rail Link

As has been mentioned the conurbation of Poole has good rail links to London and other parts of the country, making it accessible for both tourists and freight operators. In line with government initiatives Poole is working with neighbouring authorities and the train operating companies to develop and expand rail passenger use. The enhanced service is expected to include a Poole – Swanage service, promoted by the Purbeck Railway Partnership.

The branch line that links to the Port is currently under-utilised and is only used for freight. Government guidance states that sites should be identified and protected where they could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen choices for movement of rail freight. The Port rail link will be developed as the principal rail freight access for the conurbation and track capacity and materials handling facilities will be improved. It is also important that local authorities work with port and rail operators in seeking to achieve a major increase in the use of the Port rail link.

## 12.4 Port Services

The Port of Poole is significant in strategic and regional terms in providing ferry and commercial cargo handling services to continental Europe and the Channel Islands. The Government’s strategy for ports is encapsulated within the document, “Modern Ports: A UK Policy”. It highlights the economic role of ports and the contribution that shipping makes to sustainable transport. The UK economy depends on international trade and ports, such as Poole, to serve the national interests in supporting the competitiveness of national and regional economies. The Department for Transport are reviewing the national Ports Policy and are looking at the future of ports until about 2030. Among other things they are considering the likely future demand for port capacity and how smaller ports can realise their potential as businesses.

The Poole Local Plan identifies that there is sufficient deep water frontage and infrastructure in place to allow for an increase in ferry services and coastal shipping if required. The increased versatility of the port afforded by channel deepening shows the commitment to supporting local and Government policies in promoting transport of passengers and freight by sea. Growth in this mode of transport will undoubtedly boost the economy of the region but this needs to be underpinned by the fruition of the aforementioned road and rail development proposals.