



Minutes of the Seaports stakeholders forum
Thursday 4th June 2015

Location:	ICIBI, 5 th Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PN
Chair:	David Bolt – Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
Attendees:	Garry Cullen – ICIBI (GC) Hilary Brown – ICIBI (HB) David Whitehead – British Ports Association (DW) Tim Reardon – UK Chamber of Shipping (TR)
Apologies:	Theresa Crossley – UK Major Ports Group Richard Ballantyne – British Ports (RB)

Item No.	Issue	Notes	Actions
1.	Welcome and Introduction from the New Chief Inspector.		
2.	Minutes and action points of last meeting 1. Extending the stakeholder list 2. Exit checks	<p>Minutes of the last meeting accepted.</p> <p>DW and TR both agreed that they represented the majority of ports in the UK.</p> <p>Leisure operators could be represented through the Royal Yachting Association, who interact with Border Force when necessary. However, DW & TR considered that all areas of seaports were sufficiently represented in the current forum.</p> <p>There are no representative bodies for passengers as there are for rail, air or truck drivers.</p> <p>These were introduced in April 2015. There have been some problems, particularly at Dover and Portsmouth due to the sheer volume of passengers.</p> <p>Whilst there were queues when first introduced, this was over the Easter period, so Border Force questioned whether exit checks had a negative impact on queuing times. The</p>	<p>DB to consider speaking to RYA to get a better understanding of its role.</p>

		<p>real test will be over the summer period.</p> <p>Whilst some ports can open earlier to cater for the additional time required, albeit with associated staffing costs, this is not possible at ports that operate around the clock like Dover.</p> <p>Similarly, the process is a sequence of events, but they are not all in the same order at different ports.</p> <p>The additional problem at Dover is layout, in that the coach hall was originally designed to deal with just one coach at a time, despite the volume of coaches entering the port regularly exceeding this number.</p> <p>The typical profile of coach passengers was either school parties (exempt from checks) or those who were older and less mobile.</p> <p>There are concerns over the peak July holiday period, for which Border Force have stated they have contingency plans, although they have not shared these plans as yet.</p> <p>There are only a few ferry companies competing for business and lower passenger numbers mean margins are tighter.</p> <p>If there is an issue with a passenger, they are told to go to the Border Force booth, but there are no safeguards in place to ensure that this happens, and DW/TR were unaware of any intervention occurring.</p>	
3.	Update on relevant inspections	<p>General Aviation / General Maritime inspection is examining how Border Force manage risks in these twin areas. The inspection team is currently onsite in Luton. More information about General Aviation traffic is available than that for maritime. The report is likely to be published after the October recess.</p>	
4.	Inspection Plan 2015/16.	<p>The inspection plan has been agreed and the six announced inspections were summarised.</p> <p>Whilst not in the current inspection plan, DB set out that the Common travel Area was an area that would be considered for the 2016/17 inspection plan.</p>	
5.	Border Force service standards (TR)	<p>Passenger travel by ferry is almost exclusively for holidays. In this competitive environment, the journey is part of the experience and the operators invest heavily in ships and facilities.</p> <p>One element that the operators have no control over is the Border Force element, which can impact negatively on passengers' journey experience, particularly when immigration queues result in considerable delays.</p> <p>Good relationships had been built at local level, but this was not always reflected at more senior levels where strategic decisions were being made. In 2012, the Home Office decided, with no prior notice, that shore day visits by cruise passengers would also have</p>	

		<p>their passports examined, whereas prior to this the ship would send the manifest to BF for remote border checks to be undertaken. Passengers can now queue up to three hours which was a long time for a short visit of a few hours.</p> <p>BF queue breaches mean little, as there is no penalty or action if a breach occurs. It is also difficult to accurately measure queue times. There needs to be a better mutual understanding of each other's roles.</p> <p>There are 50-60 ports that take cruise ships, with the busiest being Dover, Southampton, Liverpool and Orkney. Conducting checks on arrival can cause significant problems at times. Such problems were mitigated in instances where Border Force officers went on board ships during part of the journey, completing border checks prior to arrival.</p> <p>TR was trying to reinstate the pre-2012 process using passenger manifests, but this is an ongoing process.</p>	
6.	Any Other Business	None	
7.	Date of Next Meeting	October/November (after GA/GM inspection has been published, to allow forum to be updated with results)	DB to set date of next meeting when GA/GM inspection is published.