

**Seaports Forum Meeting**  
Wednesday 7 February 2018

<b>Location:</b>	ICIBI, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PN
<b>Chair:</b>	(ICI) David Bolt – Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
<b>Attendees:</b>	(LS) Lianne Stephens, UK Major Ports Group (TR) Tim Reardon, UK Chamber of Shipping (DT) David Tomlins, ICIBI (CT) Chris Thompson, ICIBI (CS) Carol-Ann Sweeney, ICIBI (RP) Roland Potts, ICIBI (SJ) Samantha Jackson, ICIBI
<b>Apologies:</b>	(TM) Tim Morris, UK Major Ports Group

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Welcome and Introduction from the Chief Inspector.</b>	<p>The Chief Inspector welcomed Tim Reardon (Policy Director of the UK Chamber of Shipping) and Lianne Stephens (Executive Assistant at the UK Major Ports Group, representing the Chief Executive).</p> <p>ICI welcomed the group and explained that, while he would be writing to members formally asking for proposed topics for the 2018-19 Inspection Plan, he wanted to use the meeting to explore ideas.</p>
<b>Update on forum relevant ICIBI inspections since last meeting</b>	<p>ICI explained that the previous head of Border Force (BF), Sir Charles Montgomery, had suggested that the Inspectorate might look at seaports and coastal issues, from a resourcing perspective and in light of changing threats e.g. displacement of clandestine entries.</p> <p>The East Coast Ports (ECP) inspection found that BF's resources were stretched, which was unsurprising given the length of the coastline. This required BF to be agile, and in responding the inspection report BF had made a lot of its mobile response team.</p> <p>TR commented that if his members had noticed an increased BF presence in small harbours they had not reported this.</p> <p>The South Coast Ports inspection was underway and ICI was seeking input from forum members. The inspection could not be exhaustive, so it was important to focus on the locations and issues that mattered.</p> <p>In due course, there would be an inspection of West Coast Ports, which will take</p>

	<p>in the Common Travel Area (CTA), by which stage BF should hopefully have implemented improvements identified as necessary in the ECP and SCP inspection reports.</p>
General discussion points	<p><u>Service Standard</u></p> <p>TR said that ferry operators (who are represented by the UK Chamber of Shipping) need to know what the BF 'offer' is, i.e. what their customers should be entitled to expect, including how long people were going to have to queue at checkpoints. This should not be long, as the number of passengers who are 'turned around' is very small. TR noted that there is often a long queue to get to the checkpoint, even though the process once there is brief. Most of the passengers are families in cars, and the service standard really matters to them.</p> <p>ICI was keen to look at the service standard issue, and said it would be useful to receive industry data and perspectives from different ports, so that this could be compared.</p> <p>TR noted that Portsmouth was the biggest ferry terminal, with 2 million passengers a year. Newhaven, Plymouth and Poole all have ferry terminals with a BF presence. Dover has no BF presence for immigration. The 5 ports are different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plymouth and Newhaven are single operator terminals</li><li>• Dover, Portsmouth and Poole are common user terminals</li><li>• P&amp;O and DFDS operate into Dover</li><li>• Brittany Ferries have services from Spain and France into Portsmouth</li><li>• DFDS operate into Newhaven, where the volume of ships is small</li><li>• Ships do not arrive in Plymouth very often, but those that do are big. There are 3 BF checkpoints at Plymouth. The challenge is to manage the passenger flow given that space on the dockside is very limited</li><li>• The vast majority of coach traffic goes through Dover, although some goes through Portsmouth.</li></ul> <p>The service provided by BF on any given day depends on the number of checkpoints open and how long the queue is. When illegal migrants are found, BF moves its resources from the passenger checkpoints to deal with them, but the people in the queue suffer as a result. Perhaps it should be the illegal migrants who should wait?</p> <p>ICI asked if such problems were a daily occurrence.</p> <p>TR stated that the only way the frequency could be explored would be by an inspection of the terminal, but it happened often enough for members to complain about it.</p> <p>There is a spike in seasonal traffic, this is consistent year on year. Ships tend to be employed on the same route for years.</p>

CS noted that the BF queuing SLA is a national one, and applied to air and sea passengers.

TR explained that the numbers of non-EU passengers travelling to the UK through ferry terminals is very small. Between 1-3% of ferry passengers do not have an EU passport, mostly Turkish or Russian truck drivers. Non-EU passengers cannot be separated from EU passengers as everyone is in a vehicle.

TR also explained that any “operational issues” with BF tended to be dealt with “site by site” by the terminal manager, for example. The HO has a national consultation forum, which used to meet quarterly and was chaired by the BF Chief Operating Officer, but it does not work as a forum for escalation.

The industry would like to discuss the SLA, since it affects the speed with which ships can be offloaded and loaded with departing vehicles, but it is off limits because everyone must have their passport checked. There is no scope for any discussion. The variable is always the queue.

#### Queue times

ICI asked how BF measured queue times at seaports.

TR said that there was endless discussion about how this should be done, none of which had made any difference to how you get someone through the checkpoint. In Portsmouth, it was not unheard of for the queue to still be there from the previous ship when the next one arrives.

#### Technology

ICI asked whether the industry saw automation as offering any solutions to queue management, as was increasingly the case at airports.

TR thought this was unlikely because of the way the traffic presents itself – in cars, meaning that until there was the technology to recognise faces as cars go past an e-gate style solution for seaports would not work.

#### Vehicle examination

TR reported that ferry terminals complained that vehicles were being examined at the checkpoint rather than in the vehicle examination shed, which prolongs transaction time at the checkpoint. The only thing that really matters to the operators is the flow of traffic at the checkpoint. As long as this is not affected, operators are not concerned about vehicle checking.

#### Cruise ships

TR reported that there had been some discussions about ferry operators paying for more BF officers. This was in the context of cruise ships and the provision of ‘crossing officers’. Cruise lines are required to provide a basic service on arrival, but this is not defined, so the cruise line is not in a position to decide whether it

	<p>should pay for something more. What tends to happen is that the more expensive lines tend to pay. One line did a sample which showed that the peak time for going ashore was just after breakfast, when 2,000 passengers an hour went ashore, so this is when paying for additional BF resources might make commercial sense.</p> <p><u>Clandestines</u> ICI asked if BF officers ever went on board before vehicles disembarked to search for clandestines.</p> <p>TR said that he was not aware of this happening. He reported that he had received reports from Portsmouth of incidences where clandestines had self-harmed whilst on board to such an extent that they are removed from the ship and taken away to be treated so avoid being returned on the same ship.</p>
Any other business	<p><u>Other matters – pointers for the South Coast Ports inspection</u> British Ports Association membership includes the operators of the small harbours, of which there are a lot on the south coast. BF presence reduces the further down into the south-west one goes.</p> <p>On occasion, maritime associations band together under ‘Maritime UK’, which has its own website.</p> <p><u>Annual Plan 2018-19</u> TR’s 2 priorities for 2018-19 would be what Brexit is going to mean for the industry (e.g. passport controls), and BF’s service level for cruise ships.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	TBA