

Tyne Port Health Authority Report to the Joint Board Date: Tuesday 6 February 2018

Subject: Association of Port Health Authorities Membership

Reporting Officer: Colin MacDonald,
Clerk to the Authority

Officer Contact Details:
Tel: 0191 643 6620
Email: colin.macdonald@northtyneside.gov.uk

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update the Joint Board on the changes and improvements that have been implemented by the Association of Port Health Authorities since the Authority withdrew its membership and consider whether or not the Authority should rejoin as a member.

1.2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Joint Board:

- a) Note the changes and improvements that have been made by the Association of Port Health Authorities as outlined in section 2.1 of this report; and
- b) Decide whether or not the Authority should rejoin as a member of the Association of Port Health Authorities; and
- c) Decide which grade of membership the Authority should take should it opt to rejoin the Association of Port Health Authorities.

2.0 Information

2.1 Background

At its meeting on 4 October 2016 the Joint Board resolved to terminate its membership of the Association of Port Health Authorities ('the Association') and delegated authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to follow the appropriate process. This was as result of a debate by the Joint Board where Members agreed that continued membership

did not represent best value for money for the Authority.

At that meeting the Joint Board heard from Cllr Bell who had attended the Executive Board meeting of the Association on 27 July 2016. Cllr Bell reported that it was his view that the Association was a very worthwhile organisation he was concerned that a number of port health authorities had ceased to be part of the organisation which significantly weakened its professional standing and financial position. In addition, Cllr Bell was also concerned about the Association's current approach to governance and the manner in which it was managing its overall affairs. The Joint Board heard that a number of port health authorities had withdrawn from the Association including Hull & Goole, London, Felixstowe, Liverpool and Southampton. The Annual Conference planned for 2016 in Southampton had been cancelled and concerns had been raised by port health authorities that the Association was now failing to achieve its stated purpose.

At its meeting of 7 February 2017, the Joint Board was advised that the appropriate process had been followed and from 1 April 2017 the Authority's membership of the Association would cease. Nevertheless, dialogue was taking place between the Chair of the Authority and the Association. On 6 March 2017 Cllr Pat McCarthy MBE, the Chair of the Association's Executive Board, had written to the Chair of the Authority. Cllr McCarthy acknowledged that the Association had been facing a turbulent time over recent years and some members had not been operating in its best interests. However, significant changes and improvements had been made which was now resulting in dwindling membership being reversed with port health authorities taking up membership, for example Portsmouth, Bristol, Luton and the Falkland Islands. It was pointed out that keeping abreast of Brexit was now a key objective of the Association to assist port health authorities in dealing with the likely impacts. The Association was now involved in discussions with the Food Standards Agency and was striving to achieve greater political engagement with central government resulting in three written questions being tabled in Parliament. Cllr McCarthy invited the Authority to reconsider its decision and return to the Association.

Cllr McCarthy invited a representative of the Authority to attend the next AGM of the Association as an observer in order to maintain the Authority's links and to gain more insight into the changes and improvements that were being made. This was reported to the Joint Board on 4 October 2017 where the Chair advised that he had instructed the Clerk to attend.

The AGM took place in London on 22 November 2017. The Clerk attended and was able to observe the proceedings. In addition, the Clerk used the opportunity to have discussions with a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Clerk established that:

- The O&S Committee had established a Task and Finish Group to formulate an Action Plan to take the Association forward;
- Administration of the Association had changed from Manchester City Council to the London Borough of Medway;
- The governance structure had been streamlined; and
- The Association now had 34 members with a number of other port health authorities expressing an interest to join/rejoin.

The vision and objectives of the Association have been refreshed and these are including as **Appendix 1** of the report. Appendix 1 also included detail about the benefits of membership to member port health authorities.

There is clear evidence that the Association has made significant changes to the manner in which it runs its affairs and it is a decision for the Joint Board to make as to whether the Authority should rejoin. If it was to rejoin a decision would also need to be taken as to what grade of membership it should take. Previously, as a larger port health authority, the Authority had full corporate membership and indeed it had previously hosted events for the Association in previous years.

3.0 Decision Options

The decision options for the Joint Board are set out in section 2.1 of the report which is reflected in the recommendations in section 1.2.

4.0 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Vision and Objectives of the Association of Port Health Authorities

5.0 Contact Officers:

Colin MacDonald, Clerk to the Authority – Tel 0191 643 6620
Frances McClen, Chief Port Health Officer – Tel: 0191 643 6640

6.0 Background Information:

The following background papers have been used in the compilation of this report and are available for inspection at the offices of the author of the report:

Association of Port Health Authorities Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report
2016-17

Letter from the Association of Port Health Authorities Executive Board to the Authority, 6
March 2017

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

1.0 Finance and Other Resources:

There are direct financial implications associated with this report should the Joint Board decide that the Authority should rejoin the Association. The costs of taking up full corporate membership of the Association have been built-in to the draft budget 2018-19 for the Authority which will be presented to the Joint Board at its meeting of 6 February 2018 to approve. The costs of membership are affordable.

2.0 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Membership of the Association is not a statutory requirement. However, the vision and objectives of the Association are aimed at promoting delivery of the statutory functions of a port health authority.