
Report To:	Policy and Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	19 May 2020
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	PR/18/20/SA
Contact Officer:	Scott Allan	Contact No:	01475 712762
Subject:	Proposed Temporary Lay-up of Cruise Ships - Peel Ports Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Council on the proposal by Peel Ports to accommodate cruise ships in the Clyde for lay-up.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 A report was submitted to the last meeting of this Committee concerning proposals by Peel Ports to accommodate cruise ships in the Clyde for lay-up purposes. The cruise ship industry has been badly affected by the current travel restrictions imposed worldwide. Most operators are laying up ships in safe anchorages often with significant number of crew aboard, until travel restrictions are lifted. Peel Ports had advised the Council of a potential proposal for vessels to be laid up in the Clyde.
- 2.2. It was agreed that due to pressures on the health service at this time, the Council oppose the laying up of cruise ships at this time. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of Peel Ports advising of the Councils decision. A copy of this is attached. A reply had not been received at the time this report was written. An update can be given verbally if a reply is received before the meeting. Officers continue to liaise with Peel Ports however at a local level.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 A report was submitted to the last meeting of this Committee concerning proposals by Peel Ports to accommodate cruise ships in the Clyde for lay-up purposes. The cruise ship industry has been badly affected by the current travel restrictions imposed worldwide. Most operators are laying up ships in safe anchorages often with significant number of crew aboard, until travel restrictions are lifted.
- 4.2 Worldwide, the situation on Covid response is difficult to predict and cruise ship operators are not able to plan definitively for a return to normal operations. In consequence, ships are laid up with significant numbers of crew aboard whereby the ship can be made fully operational at short notice.
- 4.3 At this Committee on 05 May 2020, Members agreed to oppose the use of the Clyde with Greenock as the servicing port, at this time. This position reflected the significant impact Covid has had in this area and the implications for the health service. Glasgow & Clyde Health Board, are not supportive of cruise ships berthing in the Clyde at this time. Key concerns are around the resource implications of managing a Covid outbreak on board a ship combined with

the implications of crews being disembarked and repatriated.

- 4.4 It was recognised that the Council has no powers to prevent the lay-up of cruise ships in the Clyde. This is a matter for Peel Ports as Harbour Authority. The advice from Scottish Government officials is that Scottish and UK Ports remain open and that cruise ships, in the circumstances described, potentially could be managed in a similar manner to the 4 vessels anchored in the Firth of Forth. There are powers conferred on the Secretary of State in the circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency to direct port operators to suspend such relevant port operations as necessary to maintain border security and these are matters for the Scottish Government and UK Government to deal with or clarify.
- 4.5 This Committee agreed that a letter be sent to Peel Ports Chief Executive setting out the Council's position. A copy is attached to this report for information.
- 4.6 There has been no further feedback in response to this letter at this time. If a cruise ship was allowed to be berthed in the Clyde, the Council in partnership with Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board, as Public Health Authority, would ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place with regard to servicing of vessels, embarkation and disembarkation. Measures would be appropriate to protect both the crew on the ship as well as the local population.
- 4.7 The situation however may now be influenced by the recent statement from central government concerning a 14 day quarantine for all people entering the UK from non-exempt countries. Initially this statement was in respect of air travel but appeared to be extended to all 'points of entry' during the Prime Minister question time in Parliament. Clearly officers will need to review guidance on this when it is issued and thereafter provide advice in respect of the port in Greenock.
- 4.8 It remains the case that until the risk from Covid has substantially subsided, the best protection is for cruise ships not to come at this time. We consider there are alternatives for cruise ships where the Port infrastructure and access to health services have more resilience than this area at this time.

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Our Ref: AF/JM

Date: 06 May 2020

Mark Whitworth
Chief Executive Officer
Peel Ports Group
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Dear Mark

Proposal to lay up cruise ships in the Clyde

Andrew Hemphill has very helpfully shared with us the proposal to bid for cruise ship lay ups in the Clyde serviced through the Port of Greenock. As a Council we have concerns over this, our health services have been severely stretched due to Covid. You may have seen the news that at present Inverclyde has significantly more Covid cases than any other part of Scotland.

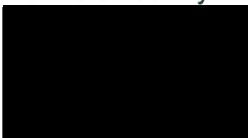
The issue was discussed in private yesterday at our Policy and Resources Executive Sub Committee. The Committee has asked that I write to you to express the formal position of the Council.

At this time Inverclyde Council cannot support a proposal to lay up cruise ships in the Clyde. During this time of pandemic it wouldn't be appropriate to put a significant number of people into one location which has the potential to put strain on our public health services.

We continue to support cruise operations and we want people to visit Inverclyde and Scotland to experience our wide culture, outstanding scenery and world class attractions. Hopefully that time will come soon but at the moment we are in an unprecedented situation and we need to protect our public health services.

Scott Allan, Corporate Director of Environment, Regeneration and Resources would be happy to discuss any issues with you.

Yours sincerely



Aubrey Fawcett
Chief Executive