



## Ports policy issues highlighted

The importance of local and national transport and planning policies safeguarding land adjacent to ports for transport-related uses to ensure they can meet the demands of economic growth has been stressed by Aberdeen Harbour Board in a submission to the Scottish Executive's Review of Ports Policy.

The submission also states: *"It is critical that policy makers continue to recognise the strategic importance of ports and ensure that the industry is engaged in the formulation of local and national transport strategies."*

*"Such strategies should also recognise the economic and environmental benefits offered by coastal Ro/Ro and short-sea shipping connections and promote these as an alternative and complementary to road and rail transportation."*

Other points from the submission include:

- While there is an opportunity to develop a ports policy addressing Scottish issues, a singular ports strategy for the UK would create a level playing field within the ports industry.
- For ports to operate effectively, they require good and efficient landside connections to the national road and rail network. Ongoing Government investment is therefore crucial.
- There is serious concern among maritime interests over the detrimental impact current proposals for a windfarm in Aberdeen Bay may have on navigational safety at the port.
- The Harbour Board look forward to having a close working relationship with the recently formed North East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership and hope the new Partnership will continue the very good work previously undertaken and achieved by the Nestrans group.

The full submission can be viewed at [www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk](http://www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk)

## Marine operations' centre of activity

The development of Aberdeen Harbour's new £4.5 million Marine Operations Centre reached its final stages this month in preparation for taking over the role of monitoring and directing shipping from the nearby Navigation Control Centre - the familiar "Roundhouse".

Installation and commissioning of the latest Vessel Traffic Services equipment was underway, bringing improvements in the handling of around 25,000 vessel movements annually.

Training on the new equipment and familiarisation with the Centre's facilities was also underway.

The port's ship's bridge simulator, a training tool which has already proved its worth, has been relocated from Blaikies Quay and enhanced. (See Simulator upgraded)

Harbour Board Engineering Director, Ken Reilly, commented: *"With the final stages taking a few weeks, the state-of-the-art Centre is set to bring important benefits to the efficient operation of the port."*

The Board's meeting this month was held at the Centre and port's users were also given an insight into the facility.

\*An oil painting of the Centre by Aberdeen artist, Eric Auld, now hangs in the Board's offices. Copies of the painting, signed by Eric, are being used by the Board in promotion of the port.

**\*\*THE CENTRE IS TO RECEIVE A DESIGN AWARD IN EARLY OCTOBER...**

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## Simulator upgraded

To coincide with its transfer to the Marine Operations Centre, the Harbour Board's ship's bridge simulator has been upgraded at a cost of £150,000 to reflect industry trends and to meet requirements for future training.

Used extensively in the training of Board pilots and other marine staff in port operations and emergency scenarios, it is also being employed increasingly on a commercial basis for training and assessing pilots from other ports and crews of offshore oil industry safety standby vessels.

The Board's Operations Director & Harbour Master, Captain Ray Shaw, said: *"The enhanced equipment will make an increased contribution to operations and safety at the port, and also to marine activities undertaken by others."*

Improved graphics give a far more realistic appearance to the display on a curved screen, and new, reversible vessel controls allow ship models to be operated from both ends of the wheelhouse, reflecting equipment installed on modern oil support vessels and tugs.

An additional smaller ship's bridge allows training to include the interaction between a large vessel and a tug or a standby vessel and her daughter craft.

## Record half-year activity

The port's busy start to the second half of the year includes record monthly shipping in July, with the volume reaching 2,120,599 gross tonnes.

Activity is building on the best yet January - June performance, with imports and exports reaching a new high at 2.49 million tonnes, compared with 2.29 million tonnes in the first half of 2005.

The tonnage of vessels was also a new record, at 11.38 million gross tonnes, up from 9.99 million gross tonnes. The figure reflects a rise in the number of vessels to 4,120 (3,850) and the larger ships using the port.

*"The higher price of oil has seen increased activity by many of our users, both in the North Sea and in exports to West Africa and the Caspian Region. It has not been all oil-related, however, and other sectors have also generated significant traffic through the port,"* said Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker.

*"The figures are another clear demonstration of the port's ability to attract and accommodate additional traffic."*

The capacity will be further strengthened by a current project creating 20,000 square metres of surfaced back-up area at Point Law Peninsula, and by other developments in the future.

# Range of Board candidates sought

The Harbour Board are seeking applications from a wide range of candidates to fill three vacancies for non-executive members.

The process of widening the relevant interests and strategic experience represented on the Board continues. To complement the existing range of expertise, candidates with current business knowledge are being sought, as well as those experienced in trade and industry, finance and the maritime sector.

Applicants should also have a keen interest in port activities and knowledge of the economic and social context within which the port operates.

Members are expected to devote one or two days a month to the work of the Board. The remunerated appointments, for an initial three years from 1 January 2007, will be made in accordance with the Guide to Good Governance for Trust Ports.

The closing date for applications is 12.00 noon, on Friday 13 October, 2006.

For further information and how to apply, please see [www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk](http://www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk) or write to: Ian Jessiman, Board Secretary, Aberdeen Harbour Board, 16 Regent Quay, Aberdeen AB11 5SS.

## Guild Street yard concerns

Rail freight operators and port users have expressed serious concern at the planned loss of the rail freight yard at Guild Street, adjacent to the harbour, to make way for a retail and leisure development.

The issue was raised at a recent seminar hosted by the Harbour Board in association with the North East of Scotland Rail Freight Development Group to explore the potential for improving and increasing the links between sea and rail freight at the port.

Bringing together organisations involved in both areas of activity, the meeting's aims included facilitating a wider understanding and co-operation between the transport modes.

Presentations by rail freight organisations on current services were followed by discussion on the potential to increase these and the future requirements of carriers of sea-borne freight. Delegates expressed concern regarding the potential loss of the Guild Street rail freight facility. This was seen as a lost opportunity to further the integration of the two modes resulting in the removal of freight from the roads.

## New international traffic

Aberdeen Harbour's international connections have been further expanded, with Euroline Shipping involved in the introduction of two new links - to Europe and the Middle East.

Forest products distributor, Scotline Group, has become the second company this year to begin exporting timber through Aberdeen, with rough cut logs from the North-east being shipped via Beverwijk, Holland, for use in chipboard.

With around 1,500 tonnes per shipment, Scotline vessels are expected to call twice monthly in year-round traffic.

Euroline's Middle East experience helped it establish a new service despatching steel pipes direct from Aberdeen to Lattakia, Syria, for use in oil pipelines. It is hoped that initial shipments will lead to regular traffic.

With Euroline acting as agent in Aberdeen for both routes, Managing Director, Mike Packer, said: *"The prime factors in attracting the new business were the port's extensive quayside laydown areas for advance stockpiling of the cargoes, along with the rapid turnaround of vessels. The value of both has been proven again with the successful shipments undertaken."*

## On the Maritime Trail

A Maritime Trail has been added to the series of themed Heritage Trails being developed around Aberdeen by the City Council.

It encourages the public's interest in the port, while taking the requirements of safety, security and operations into account. The 5.5 kilometre trail, in two sections centred on the Maritime Museum, features 30 locations which are outlined in a companion leaflet, available from the Visitor Information Centre and other outlets.

## Fog bell on view

A bell used for more than a century to warn mariners approaching the entrance to the port in thick fog has been incorporated as a feature of new landscaping at the approaches to the Marine Operations Centre where it is attracting the interest of the public.

Cast by John Warner & Sons, London, in 1889, the bell was located at the seaward end of the North Breakwater when a final extension created the 2,600-foot long wall as it is today. It was finally removed in July, 2001, and replaced with an electronic sounder.

## Larger Streamline vessel

The Streamline Shipping Group, which operates a twice-weekly Load-on/-Load-off service between its Aberdeen terminal at Blaikies Quay and Orkney and Shetland, has introduced a larger vessel in response to the growing volume of cargo shipped on their service.

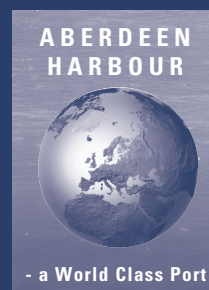
The Fehn Mistral has capacity for 205 teus (20-foot containers), an increase of around 20% on the predecessor vessel.

Operations Director for the Group, Phil Bremner, commented: *"Our recent investment in a further 200 containers and the introduction of 2 x 200 tonne capacity cranes on Shetland and Orkney is evidence of our own ongoing commitment to providing customers with the flexible service they have become accustomed to."*

The Group, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, employs around 160 in Aberdeen, Lerwick, Kirkwall, Inverness and Glasgow.

## Chamber appointment

Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce has elected Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, to its board.



For further information, please contact:

**Colin Parker**  
Chief Executive  
Aberdeen Harbour Board  
16 Regent Quay  
Aberdeen AB11 5SS

Tel: +44 (0) 1224 597000

Fax: +44 (0) 1224 571507

Email: [info@aberdeen-harbour.co.uk](mailto:info@aberdeen-harbour.co.uk)

[www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk](http://www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk)

