

## 19 SOCIO-ECONOMICS

### 19.1 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

#### *Introduction*

- 19.1.1 The business that is currently undertaken by the Port of Poole makes an important contribution to the local and regional economy, both directly and indirectly, through generating revenue for the local area and stimulating related business in the region. An overview of the trade at the Port is provided in Section 11. In the financial year of 2003/2004, the Port generated a turnover of £10.5 million, an increase of 2.3% on the previous year. In addition to revenue, the Port provides an important source of employment in the local area. The port directly employs approximately 180 individuals and there are a further 450 people employed on the port estate. Indirectly, the port is responsible for many thousands of additional jobs within Poole, Dorset and the south-west, as well as providing an essential link to industrial markets in other regions of the United Kingdom, such as the automotive industry along the M4 corridor and the manufacturing sector in the West Midlands.
- 19.1.2 The Borough of Poole has a diverse economic base, which provides a wide range of employment opportunities. This is important to the continued prosperity not only of Poole but also of Dorset. Since the 1990s, Poole's economy has performed well and unemployment rates have reflected this. Between January 1993 and February 2000, the unemployment rate in the Poole travel-to-work-area reduced from 10.5% of the workforce to 2.1%.
- 19.1.3 Poole has seen a rapid level of growth over the last few decades, with large areas of land being developed for employment activities. Between 1981 and 1987, Poole's manufacturing sector saw an increase in the manufacturing workforce in real terms but, relative to other sectors, it decreased from 36.9% to 32.4% over this period. This reflects a significant increase in other sectors, notably services. The relative decline has continued; the 1997 Census of Employment revealed that manufacturing accounted for 21.9% of Poole's workforce. Manufacturing nevertheless is a vital element in Poole's economy and employs a higher proportion of the workforce than the regional or national average.
- 19.1.4 The coastal resorts of Poole, Bournemouth and Swanage are significant tourist destinations for both day and weekend visits and longer holidays. The beaches in these resorts are the main contributors to their popularity as tourist destinations and their presence is crucial to maintaining this popularity and the significant contribution that it makes to the local and regional economy.
- 19.1.5 The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan states that in 1997 it is estimated that 4 million visitors made a trip to the county, spending an estimated £640 million. Around 30,000 people are directly employed in the tourism industry during the summer peak and, indirectly, visitor spending supports a further 10,000 jobs.

*Poole Local Plan*

- 19.1.6 The Poole Local Plan recognises the role that the Port of Poole plays in employment. Specifically, the employment aims of the Local Plan include for the promotion of the Port. Within the Plan, port expansion is allowed for, subject to highway capacity and the need to safeguard the urban environment and the ecological value of the Harbour. Port activity is at present largely highway based, but the Plan protects the potential for rail based activity and promotes the increased use of the existing railway for the handling of freight.

**19.2 PROPOSED IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE APPROACH CHANNEL DEEPENING AND OFFSHORE DISPOSAL**

**Construction phase**

*Provision of temporary employment during the dredging works*

- 19.2.1 The capital dredging of the approach channel would provide temporary employment for the duration of the dredging, disposal and beach nourishment contract. At this stage, it is not possible to determine whether this would be local employment (i.e. within Dorset) as this is dependant on the company that is awarded the dredging contract. However, it is likely that the contract would be undertaken by a company based outside the local area. If the staff are employed from outside the area, they would benefit the local economy by the money they will spend in Poole on food and accommodation for the duration of the contract. Therefore, a beneficial impact on socio-economics is predicted during the construction phase, but the impact arising is expected to be of **minor beneficial significance** given the temporary nature of the works (approximately 7 months) and the small number of personnel to be employed.

*Mitigation and residual impact*

No mitigation measures are required and the residual impact would be of **minor beneficial significance**.

**Operational phase**

*Maintenance and enhancement of business at the Port of Poole*

- 19.2.2 The Port of Poole makes an important contribution to the local and regional economy. It employs around 180 individuals directly and there are a further 450 people employed on the port estate. Indirectly, the port is also responsible for many thousands of additional jobs within Poole, Dorset and the south-west in companies which are reliant on the ferry trade. The continuation of the existing level of trade at the Port, and the potential for an enhancement in this trade, is dependant on being able to provide the necessary facilities required by customers.
- 19.2.3 The withdrawal of the *M/V Coutances* would immediately result in the loss of at least 35,000 freight units and £1,000,000 revenue (£700,000 freight and £300,000 boomage) for the port. This reduction would be swiftly compounded by further losses. A number

of road hauliers and transportation companies have stated that they would not be prepared to continue using Poole if the service was reduced to only one ship.

- 19.2.4 It is highly likely that Poole would not survive as a ferry port were the service to be reduced. This could lead to an additional loss of £4 million in revenue per annum to the Port and would, in all likelihood, lead to wholesale redundancies both in the PHC workforce and in the workforces of Brittany Ferries and other Poole and Dorset companies reliant on the ferry trade. The loss of the ferry business would bring about a severe downturn in the financial health of PHC and would inevitably mean that future capital investment in the port and harbour would be severely impaired.
- 19.2.5 The provision of a deeper access channel would therefore have a significant beneficial impact on the local economy by allowing the continuation of Port activities and the employment this generates.
- 19.2.6 It is hoped that the provision of a deeper access channel would also generate further business at the port, thereby ensuring the contribution that the port makes to the local and regional economy, both directly and indirectly, is safeguarded and potentially enhanced. However, this is dependant on the provision of additional quayside facilities. The deepening of the approach channel therefore represents a potential impact of **major beneficial significance** by maintaining current levels of Port activities and employment.

*Mitigation and residual impact*

No mitigation measures are required. The residual impact would be of **major beneficial significance**.

### 19.3 PROPOSED IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH BEACH NOURISHMENT

#### Construction phase

*Wider socio-economic benefits associated with the beneficial use of dredged material*

- 19.3.1 The use of capital dredged material for beach nourishment works represents the beneficial use of dredged material, thereby avoiding the need to dispose of such material offshore and also avoiding the need to obtain nourishment material from another source (such as a licensed onshore or offshore aggregate extraction site). As such, the use of capital dredged material in this way is the most sustainable approach to undertaking beach nourishment within Poole Bay and Swanage Bay in that it is likely to have lower environmental consequences (given that it is beneficial use of dredged material) and is a more economic alternative for Local Authorities compared with the purchase of material from an alternative commercial source. This potential impact is considered to be of **moderate beneficial significance**.

*Mitigation and residual impact*

No mitigation measures are required. The residual impact would be of **moderate beneficial significance**.

*Provision of temporary employment during the construction phase*

- 19.3.2 The potential minor benefit to the local economy provided by construction employment for the scheme as a whole (i.e. approach channel dredging, disposal of dredged material and beach nourishment) has been encompassed in the assessment of impacts under Section 19.2.

**Operational phase**

*Implications for the tourist industry*

- 19.3.3 Much of the tourist industry of Poole, Bournemouth and Swanage is dependant (to a large extent) on attracting visitors to the coast and the presence of sandy beaches is an important factor in the attraction of the coastal area to tourists. The proposed nourishment schemes (and any subsequent renourishment that may be undertaken), therefore, would ensure the continued presence of good quality beaches. Given the high importance of the tourist industry to Dorset, and particularly that generated by Bournemouth and Poole, the potential impact of the nourishment is considered to be of moderate to **major beneficial significance**.

*Mitigation and residual impact*

No mitigation measures are required. The residual impact would be of **major beneficial significance**.