



## **Release Statement to Stakeholders on Cessation of the Early Payment Concession**

We wish to clarify the latest situation with regards to the 2022 CHA Harbour Dues and in particular the withdrawal of the early repayment option. The annual increase in the standard Harbour Dues rate has been set at just 2% which is below the current rate of inflation.

The early repayment concession was introduced in 2011 to allow river users to benefit from the funds received under the “Crossrail” project on Wallasea Island. This was clearly explained at the time and it was always understood, that on cessation of the project and its related funds, the early repayment bonus would no longer apply. The Wallasea Island project ceased in 2019 and our last payment was received in 2020.

We are legislated by the Department for Transport and the trustees are under an obligation to ensure that the Harbour Authority balances the books. Maintaining the “Early Repayment Scheme” whilst not having the continued Crossrail income, could over the medium term, breach this obligation.

Further details are contained in our Chairman’s report dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and an extract below from the Ports Good Governance Guidance Code.

In the meantime could we respectfully remind vessel owners that the policy driven aspect of the running of the harbour is the remit of the trustees. The staff including the Harbour Master are not responsible for setting tariffs and should not be held to account for such matters whilst going about the duties they are tasked to do.

Extract

Please find below the extract from the Ports Good Governance Guidance code about harbour dues s.2

### **Harbour dues**

2.45 Section 26 of the Harbours Act 1964 gives SHAs (Small Harbour Authorities) the powers to levy ship, passenger and goods dues on those using the harbour. SHAs can also levy other charges for the provision of specific services, such as the licensing or provision of a mooring.

2.46 Harbour dues should be set at a level that allows for, at least, proper maintenance of a harbour and to meet conservancy and other duties. Harbour dues may also need to allow for a return on investments. SHAs have a duty to publish standard dues tariffs.

2.47 There should be no presumption that dues levied on a specific group or type of user should be exclusively reinvested in improving services and facilities on offer to that user. Users are first and foremost customers of a port. For trust ports, the proceeds 11 Section 33 of the Harbours Docks and Piers and Clauses Act 1847 21 from their custom should be utilised prudently to maximise benefit to all stakeholders and in the best and most effective interest of the future of the trust ports.

**Crouch Harbour Authority**

**17<sup>th</sup> January 2022**