

Response from Cllr Nick Ireland, Leader of Dorset Council to a Deputation from Stand Up to Racism Dorset and the Portland Global Friendship Group

Thank you for coming as a deputation to the Dorset Council meeting this evening and for telling the Council about your concerns and suggestions.

Dorset Council remains opposed to the use of the Bibby Stockholm barge. We are also opposed to any extension of the contract between the Home Office and Portland Port, and we will use the opportunity of a new Government and a new local MP to pursue our opposition.

While the barge is here, the council will continue to work constructively with the Home Office and other partners to ensure the safe running of the vessel for everyone residing on it and to assist with effective integration with the local area and communities.

With appropriate council officers, I would like to meet you to discuss your concerns and proposals. I welcome such a conversation and want to continue to find a positive way forward.

In the meantime, the Multi Agency Forum (MAF), consisting of representatives from all agencies involved including local councils, Dorset Police and NHS, and chaired by Dorset Council, continues to meet regularly and provides a constructive way to engage and influence Home Office management of their project.

The Community Impact Group, also chaired by Dorset Council, meets weekly. Any issues are raised at these meetings and discussed with solutions identified and appropriate action.

Monthly updates from the MAF are posted on the Dorset Council website and shared with all partners and local communities and continue to be a trusted source of accurate information regarding all partners' involvement with the Bibby Stockholm.

I look forward to meeting with you when we can pick up the issues raised.