

Appendix 3: PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING FOR LARGER VESSELS

It is generally agreed that the dimensions of vessels engaged in coastal and near-European shipping are gradually increasing. Many of the smaller and older vessels that were once commonplace at ports such as Sharpness are no longer competitive compared with modern larger vessels.

The majority of modern vessels are generally very manoeuvrable and most are equipped with bowthrusters and effective “high lift” rudders. However, vessels with a higher DWT are likely to be restricted by their increased beam and/or draft to movements on fewer tides, and hence a reduced “window” for entry to the port.

The older and larger vessels may not be so well-equipped and may require tug assistance in order to expedite entry on a particular tide. This, in itself, raises questions concerning the availability, suitability and cost of tugs in the Severn estuary.

The current Pilotage Directions set out the minimum level of information that is required by the pilot in order to assist in planning a safe and expeditious passage to or from Sharpness. The required information is summarised below:

- (a) ETA or ETD
- (b) Summer Dead Weight
- (c) Forward draft in fresh water
- (d) Aft draft in fresh water
- (e) Maximum beam
- (f) Speed
- (g) Maximum height of mast above keel
- (h) Type of rudder (e.g. standard, high-lift, Kort nozzle)
- (i) Status of bowthruster (if fitted)
- (j) Any other information relevant to the navigational status of the vessel (e.g. significantly reduced visibility due to configuration of cargo, defects in compass or radar equipment) that is brought to the attention of the agent
- (k) Destination (if known) for departing vessels

A vessel whose dimensions exceed any of the following criteria may trigger a pre-arrival conference (involving the agent/shipowner, BW, GPP and GHT) to agree how the arrival of the vessel will be managed (including a discussion on whether there is a requirement for additional assistance):

- 5000DWT
- 100m loa
- 16m maximum beam
- 6m maximum freshwater draft
- or are known to have an unusual or non-standard hull or superstructure configuration