

24/7/19 10:00 – 10:45

Small Boats – Planning Group

Meeting 1 – Readout

Attending:

Dan O’Mahoney, JMOCC (chair)

JMOCC

Toby Whale, BF Maritime

BF NCC

BF SE&E – TF1

IE, Silver - TF2

Comms

Paul Campbell, MCGA

MCGA

MoD

DfT

DfT

Apologies:

JMOCC

MoD

MoD

Stephen Whitton, BF Maritime

BF SE&E – TF1

Overview

The purpose of this planning group is to enable JMOCC to set out what transitioning into BAU will look like, both on the water and in terms of the whole of the HMG piece, should BF Maritime draw down on their assets to re-task to other work.

MCGA set out that they treat **all** small boats incidents in the channel as SAR events (until known differently) owing to the potential factors involved – the boat being overloaded, not fit for the journey it is undertaking, and the deficiencies in seamanship of the migrants onboard. BF Maritime *do* have an overarching MARSEC remit, and this *is* a complex MARSEC issue, but each incident is individually tasked to them by MCGA (whether via a report directly to them from the small boat itself, a sighting by a commercial vessel or from Cherbourg via MIB) and is first and foremost a SAR one.

Should BF draw down on resources in the SE corner and the level of arrivals does not decrease, then it is likely that the MCGA will task the RNLI in a greater number of incidents than currently. Obviously the MCGA's situational awareness of all governmental assets in the area, be they MoD, BF or MMO means they will utilise these if they are the best option. It is extremely rare to task commercial shipping to an incident.

There are obvious differences between an incident response from a BF vessel and an RNLI vessel. Lifeboatmen are not law enforcement officials and they will, subsequent to resolution of the SAR aspect, need to identify a place of safety to land the migrants at, to be met shoreside by an appropriate level of BF / IE response.

Consideration will need to be given as to whether a reduction in law enforcement surface assets to be a pull factor in terms of attempts. Air assets are not currently being deployed by BF – not only are the 2 companies who would submit bids suffering from technical issues, but the aims of the tasking are being achieved without them at this point in time. The French have deployable air capability, and do also favour a drone option. They are not currently flying any of the latter owing to a PAF-led decision about piloting licence requirements. Science and Innovation are due to visit the departure beaches in the coming weeks and assess optimal solutions for each one.

Actions

JMOCC to notify next meeting idc. To be held prior to next XWH Small Boats SSG on 07/08.

JMOCC to produce a paper detailing our understanding of the current x-HMG place, setting out options for how it will be delivered differently should there be a draw-down of BF assets.