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Dear Angus,

I am writing in response to your letter of 25 November to the Secretary of State regarding the International Trade Committee's UK Freeports inquiry.

I agree with your view on the importance of Freeports policy, particularly the vital role they will play in boosting trade and investment. As you note, the responsibility for the policy now sits with the Treasury (HMT), with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) running the bidding process that commenced earlier this month. As the lead departments, HMT and MHCLG work closely with other departments across Whitehall to keep them informed as the policy and bidding process develops.

I strongly believe in the importance of ministerial accountability before select committees but, as we are not one of the departments responsible for this policy, do not feel it would be appropriate for a DIT minister to appear. We would, of course, be happy to provide written evidence on the broad opportunities for trade and investment that Freeports can provide.

Yours sincerely,


GRAHAM STUART MP
Minister for Exports
Department for International Trade