



Liam Byrne MP,
Chair, Business and Trade Select Committee,
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA

24 March 2026

Dear Chair,

Firstly, I wanted to thank you and members of the Select Committee for visiting the Port of Dover on Monday March 2. I would like to repeat my pledge that we are at your disposal to give oral evidence or supply further material to aid to your committee's work. This letter is a follow up to your visit containing some strategic developments for the Committee.

For your visit, we felt it was important to showcase port and the key and extensive infrastructure improvements which we have been undertaking. These have been both to handle new border rules under the EU Entry-Exit System (EES) as well as delivering on our wider ambitions to grow the traffic we handle and to make the port as frictionless as possible. It is crucial that we get the best possible solution for importers and exporters and to strengthen our Nation's critical supply chains. This should be the priority for any 'reset' in relations with the EU, as we discussed.

It was interesting to learn about the committee's plans for a stock take report ten years after the Brexit referendum and your support to take friction out of key supply chains. This is hugely important. Dover is a port of national significance for passengers, freight and UK trade. It handles £144bn of freight value annually which represents 33% of all UK trade in goods with the EU. It is the UK's most important roll on-roll off (RO-RO) freight port representing 31% of the total HGVs transiting through the UK's major seaports.

I was particularly encouraged by your observations that the Port of Dover is a key piece of national infrastructure where we could better sweat capacity and usage. You are right. We have set out how this growth can be better realised and delivered in our *Dover 2050* strategy which I have attached. Importantly, we are keen to take a lead on becoming a digital leader for smooth border transit, dramatically increasing border fluidity towards a frictionless experience.

We are also keen to decarbonise the ferries on the Short Straits' 22-mile maritime crossing with France so that we avoid future UN and European shipping carbon taxes. The route represents 8% of the UK's maritime emissions. Consequently, we are working to secure UN Green Shipping Corridor status at COP31 later this year. If ships have to pay new carbon taxes then these costs will be passed onto their customers and ultimately will mean supply chains and goods become more expensive on the shelves.



Our key recommendations/observations to the committee are as follows:

Port of Dover Digital Transformation

Dover should be supported as a digital 'sandbox'. If you get the Dover right you will get so many other things right for frictionless trade and growth. Our vision is to become the most tech-enabled port in Europe. As we have the EU border at the port due to juxtaposed controls we have had to prepare and deliver the EES border solution. Consequently, we have a unique opportunity to design, trial and adopt the digital seamless border of the future. We are part of a Short Straits system with our French sister ports, and it is imperative that the system as a whole works in sync. Collaborating with them and other French/EU partners in the digitisation space on things like interoperable data and data sharing would be very valuable and exciting in the busiest roll-on roll-off gateway to continental Europe – a great global leadership opportunity.

New Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) must have associated road improvements in Kent (A2)

Work has started on the LTC which will connect Essex to Kent with two 2.6 mile tunnels under the River Thames. Each tunnel will have three lanes, providing a total of six lanes to alleviate congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing. The LTC should be completed by 2034 and will cost over £10bn.

The LTC will significantly improve the connection and capacity for freight flows to be able to reach the Port of Dover from the Midlands and the North. But it is critically important that the existing road infrastructure in Kent can handle this extra traffic. But the A2 is not even dualled in south Kent which risks major congestion in the future as flows try to reach Dover. Consequently, we would like to see this dualling investment made before the LTC opens.

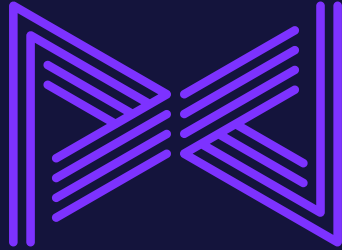
Support Short Straits as a UN Green Shipping Corridor

Working with the UN's International Maritime Organisation we have the ambition to decarbonise the Short Straits and create the world's first high volume Green Shipping Corridor. DfT ministers have already said they support our ambition but we would like to see wider ambition for this vision around funding and policy support. Without intervention, emerging global and regional maritime emissions frameworks risk significantly increasing costs for operators, which will ultimately be passed on to supply chains. For the Chancellor's ambitions around economic growth following her recent Mais lecture to be realised, this becomes increasingly important on the UK's key trade route with the EU.

I hope that the above is helpful to the Committee and we look forward to supporting your ongoing work as much as possible.

Your sincerely

Doug Bannister
Chief Executive, Port of Dover



**PORT OF
DOVER**

2050

Empower Exchange

2050 VISION

The UK's most seamless, sustainable and tech-enabled port

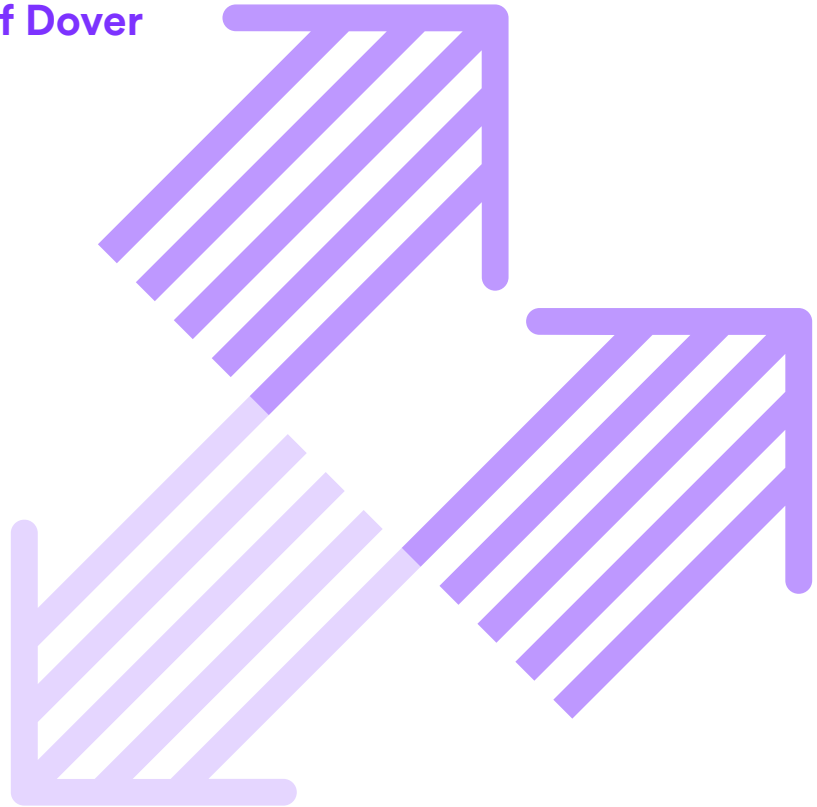
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Introduction

A new 30 year plan for the Port of Dover

- Port of Dover is the **closest port to mainland Europe**, giving it an unrivalled geographic advantage
- As one of the UK's most iconic and nationally critical ports for travel and trade, Dover faces some particular challenges and opportunities
- **Port of Dover 2050: Empower Exchange** is the Port's new long term plan to address these challenges and opportunities in pursuit of its vision over the next 30 years
- **Port of Dover: Empower Exchange** delivers local economic development and national growth, will create new jobs, and support the skills of tomorrow.



Value to the UK economy

Increased trade flows



Port of Dover 2050: Empower Exchange has the power to unlock the full potential of the Port, facilitating a **20% increase** in the value of trade handled to **£173 billion**.

OUR AMBITION

Investments to support increase in cargo volumes

New space for port related businesses to grow

New commercial and residential development

Upgrades to cruise infrastructure to support more passengers

More facilities for visitors to the Port to enjoy

New and upgraded state of the art ferry berths

Additional capacity to accommodate ferry traffic in port

Reordered border controls and enhanced traffic flow speeding up travel

Our ambition for the Eastern Docks

- Ferry passengers will have a quicker and more seamless journey from Port entry to onward voyage, travelling through efficient border controls, with intelligent use of digital technology enhancing the user experience.
- Port infrastructure will be modern and future proofed with new and upgraded ferry berths, more efficient roads and utilities infrastructure, with electrification and automation of maritime travel enabled.
- Operational resilience will be enhanced through additional capacity within the Port to accommodate ferry traffic, taking it off local roads and the strategic road network.



Our ambition for the Western Docks

- Increased volumes of imported and exported goods will arrive and depart via the Port's expanded cargo terminal supporting the creation of new jobs and growth in the local, regional, and wider UK economy.
- Bigger cruise ships will be accommodated adapting to developments in the global tourism market supporting Dover as a destination, and local and regional tourism.
- New flexible space and facilities for maritime and related industries will accommodate growth in cross channel and global trade through the Port, supporting economic growth and development.



Our ambition for the **Waterfront**

- Dover's waterfront will become a regional destination attracting tourists and local communities alike to visit and spend time through new and enhanced cultural, entertainment, and recreational facilities, alongside new places to live.
- There will be a thriving maritime ecosystem in the Port supporting innovation and skills development based in a new commercial quarter.



Delivery



- Additional land to support Port growth created within the Western Docks
- Relocated and reordered border controls for ferry travel to France and beyond
- Commercial quarter in the Waterfront anchored by new Port offices
- Increased electrical supply into Port supporting decarbonisation of travel
- Essential works to address ageing infrastructure in the ferry terminal.

- Upgraded cruise facilities facilitating significant increase in passenger numbers
- Greater capacity within the ferry terminal to accommodate ferry traffic
- Additional amenity in the Waterfront for visitors and locals alike
- Ship to shore power enabled.

- New state of the art ferry berths and upgraded existing berths fit for a modern cross channel fleet
- Further improvements to traffic flows in the ferry terminal reducing transit time through the Port
- Decommissioning redundant infrastructure
- Further development of Marina Curve as a waterfront destination.

- Ongoing decommissioning of redundant infrastructure
- Adaptation of infrastructure to further improve ferry traffic flow
- Further activation of the Waterfront and historic assets.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Benefits of Port of Dover 2050

PoD 2050 delivers:

- Benefits to the local, regional and national economy
- Returns to Port of Dover and investors
- Benefits to nature
- Benefits for people



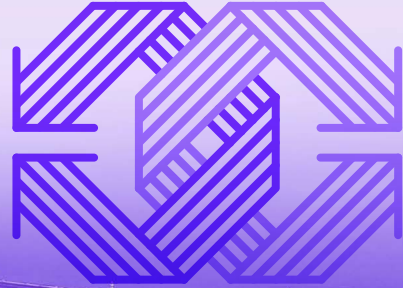
PoD 2050 supports:

- Enhancement of the Port's unique geographical position as the closest port to mainland Europe, boosting UK trade and productivity
- A globally competitive UK maritime sector
- Delivery of ambitious net zero targets, spearheading the reduction of carbon emissions in the maritime industry
- Economic growth in Dover, Kent, and the UK through greater operational efficiency
- Zero queues and reduced congestion in Kent towns catalysing local regeneration
- New jobs and the opportunity for UK coastal towns to retrain and reskill their people for today's and tomorrow's industries.



Developing our plans together

Listening to our stakeholders



A wide variety of stakeholders, including the general public, have been engaged in order to understand the concerns and aspirations of all those who use, work in, live by, or are affected by the Port, to create the framework for Port of Dover 2050.

The feedback we have received and the Port's response to it, is set out overleaf.

Feedback Summary and Analysis

Overarching feedback by area: Eastern Docks

EASTERN DOCKS

Digitisation and automation of border controls and traffic flows

You said: We support the use of digital technologies and changes to ferry terminal layout in order to streamline and automate check in/border processes, improve traffic flows, reduce dwell times and enhance customer experience.

PoD 2050 response: The Outbound Controls Project will re-order and modernise the outbound controls as well as create additional capacity inside the port to improve traffic management and flows.

PoD 2050 will build on this, increasing capacity and streamlining routes as well as enhancing inbound traffic flows. PoD 2050 will also deliver new and improved ferry berths alongside long-term landside infrastructure changes.

The cycle route around the Eastern Docks will be improved in order to enhance cyclist safety.

Automation is being widely considered for a range of potential purposes including automated freight movements, autonomous vessels, and automated check-in.

Ferry passenger services

You said: We think ancillary services such as toilets and food provision should be improved.

PoD 2050 response: Working with the ferry operators and French sister ports, PoD 2050 will look at how welfare facilities (e.g. toilets, food and drink) could be improved in Dover to enhance the overall user experience. This includes accessible facilities in the Buffer Zone and assembly lanes.

Digital technologies will also be explored to enhance the customer experience and details will be shared once an outline design is developed.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Feedback Summary and Analysis

Overarching feedback by area: Western Docks

WESTERN DOCKS

Public access

You said: We wish to see improved public access to the Western Docks.

PoD 2050 response: The nature of port operations in the Western Docks, both now, and into the future, means that much of the Western Docks will not be suitable or safe for public access. However, a new publicly accessible route is being created between the Waterfront and the Cruise terminals, and public access to Shakespeare beach will remain. PoD 2050 focuses public amenity within the Waterfront, to provide new and enhanced facilities adjacent to Dover town centre, supporting the local economy, and providing public access to attractions and services.

Event space

You said: It would be great to use the Western Docks (particularly Cruise Terminal 1, the former Dover Marine Railway Station building) as a public event space out of season again.

PoD 2050 response: Flexible use of the cruise terminal for out of season activities is being considered. However, the Waterfront is the preferred location for public events given its accessibility and amenity.

Cruise terminal improvements

You said: We want to see cruise terminal investments to improve the visual appeal of the area.

PoD 2050 response: Cruise terminal improvements are underway. Future expansion plans will be developed through PoD 2050.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Feedback Summary and Analysis

Overarching feedback by area: Western Docks

Cargo business

You said: It would be great to increase the variety of cargo handled.

PoD 2050 response: PoD 2050 seeks to support growth of the existing cargo business, including perishables, aggregate, steel and grain.

Areas of flexible land-use have been identified that could include the handling of new forms of cargo, enabling on-site logistics service provision or expanded on-site cargo storage. Other potential land uses are also being considered.

Cargo operations

You said: The potential for increased 24-hour cargo operations could lead to several concerns. These include health concerns regarding those working night shifts, the potential noise impact on neighbours, and concerns that the existing road network would not be able to cope.

PoD 2050 response: Working-hour arrangements for port cargo operatives have been considered in order to provide operational flexibility while meeting the forecasted cargo demand. Increasing existing 24 hour working provides the opportunity to grow the cargo business and create new jobs and employment. Mitigation measures will be considered and implemented as required to help address any noise, health, or road network issues.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Feedback Summary and Analysis

Overarching feedback by area: Waterfront

WATERFRONT

Watersports

You said: We'd like to see improved water sports facilities in order to encourage more people to make use of the Waterfront and to support more events and competitions in the area.

PoD 2050 response: Working in partnership to develop enhanced water sports activities on the Waterfront forms part of PoD 2050.

Public amenities

You said: It would be good to see more leisure facilities such as cafés, bars, shops and entertainment venues in order to attract the community and visitors to the Waterfront, and turn it into more of a tourist destination. Solutions for high levels of wind such as having plenty of trees or other specifically designed wind barriers would help weather-proof the area.

PoD 2050 response: Partnership working to enhance public spaces at the Waterfront, and to develop new facilities including bars and restaurants alongside improved landscaping and increased green infrastructure form part of PoD 2050.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Feedback Summary and Analysis

Overarching feedback by area: Port-wide

PORT-WIDE

Electrification of infrastructure and climate change adaptation

You said: We believe investment in electric vehicle and other port infrastructure should be a priority. This will help improve air quality and drive sustainable, carbon-free transportation.

PoD 2050 response: Electric vehicle infrastructure was supported across all stakeholder groups, and we know ferry electrification is a priority for the ferry operators too.

PoD 2050 includes the enabling of EV charging points across the Port, including the Eastern Docks and Waterfront.

The 2050 plan includes measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including promoting the development of more sustainable transport options. It will also enable the electrification of port operations and ship to shore power for cruise vessels. The electrification of ferries is a key priority for the port and we are working with the ferry operators and our French sister ports to enable this.

Delivery subject to funding, financing, consents, approvals, and securing investment partners.

Delivering together

Working together with our stakeholders

The Port cannot deliver PoD 2050 and its vision of being the UK's most seamless, sustainable and tech-enabled port without the help and support of its partners and stakeholders.

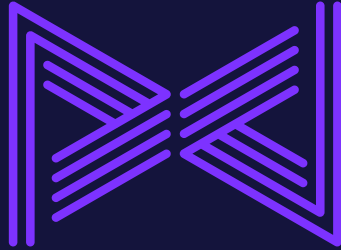
Ongoing engagement will therefore continue to take place as the design develops.

Thank you for your support and input.

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