



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

23 February 2021

Dear Chancellor,

Supporting Letter for the Freeport East Bid

As local Members of Parliament we wish to urge you to grant Freeport status to the Freeport East bid. Freeport East is best placed to meet the Government's objectives for Freeports to establish them as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK, promote regeneration and job creation and create hotbeds for innovation.

The bid is well placed to deliver the Government's commitment to levelling up as deprivation in this area is under appreciated: Felixstowe and Harwich fall within the boundaries of neighbourhoods ranked in the top 20% most deprived in the country as of 2019, with the Dovercourt neighbourhood of Harwich which includes Bathside Bay ranking among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in terms of employment, income and overall deprivation.

GDP per capita across the Haven Gateway areas significantly trails both the broader East of England region and the whole of England, with GDP in Essex Haven Gateway at £25,800 per head compared to £31,980 across England as of 2018. 18% of LSOAs (areas) in Tendring and 14% of LSOAs in Ipswich were ranked among the top 10% most deprived in England in 2019 according to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation, with four LSOAs in Tendring ranking among the top 1% most deprived areas in England and one area (Tendring 018A) ranking as actually the most deprived LSOA in the country.

Wage growth has been particularly weak in recent years, reflecting the rise of self-employment and less secure contracts, especially in lower skilled jobs. ONS data show that average weekly earnings in our proposed freeport area are often significantly below the national average. Weekly earnings in Tendring (£556) and Ipswich (£527) are below the GB average (£587) and locations such as Liverpool (£571) which are often considered more 'deprived'. Low incomes are widespread and entrenched across many of our communities.

Freeport East is the major gateway for unitised trade. We welcome and support the regenerative benefits other Freeports may bring but shipping economics dictate that the largest container ships will always call at ports offering the minimum deviation from the main routes into Antwerp/Rotterdam. Freeport East has the minimum deviation and for



that reason is the major gateway linking exporters in the Midlands and North with global markets. A successful Freeport East will boost regeneration across the UK having the potential for £5bn of additional GVA over ten years as a result of enhanced international trade. Additionally, it is uniquely equipped to meet Government's objective for global trade hubs and to take advantage of opportunities presented by new trade deals.

Meeting our net zero targets will create well-paying jobs across the UK. Freeport East will use our location at the heart of massive new wind and nuclear generation projects to become a national centre of technical excellence. The Freeport will host the UK's first Green Hydrogen Hub, in partnership with UK Power Networks, Wrightbus and Ryse Energy – led by Jo Bamford. This is a vital kick-starter towards the government's target to develop 5GW of low carbon hydrogen by 2030, when the global market will be worth \$420 billion, more than double what is today.

The East of England already has three of the UK's most important centres of innovation - BT's research centre at Adastral Park, Norwich Research Park and Cambridge University – leading DIT to recognise the area as a *High Potential Opportunity Location*.

Freeport East is backed by Hutchison Ports, one of the UK's largest inward investors and phase 1 of the development has planning consent and can be stood-up quickly giving tangible evidence of the policy's success.

We hope you will be able to support this bid.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP

Peter Aldous MP

James Cartlidge MP

Jo Churchill MP

Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP

Tom Hunt MP

Daniel Poulter MP

Richard Bacon MP

Jerome Mayhew MP

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP

James Wild MP

Duncan Baker MP

George Freeman MP

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

Will Quince MP

Giles Watling MP

Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP

Anthony Browne MP

Lucy Frazer QC MP