

Celebrating Maritime 2050 one-year-on

General Secretary, my Lords, Ladies, Gentlemen, and colleagues – welcome so much, to the Houses of Parliament.

It is an absolute pleasure to host you for a few hours today as we celebrate [Maritime 2050](#).

It has indeed been an incredible year for the sector.

And over the past few months, I have travelled across the country to see how our ports and shipping sector have been responding to Maritime 2050.

I asked the team to make a list of everywhere I have been to, and just before I read it out I would like to put on record how pleased I am that my department is allowing me to stand still for a couple of hours...so thank you all!

I've visited Belfast, Blyth, Tilbury and London Gateway, Felixstowe and Harwich, Plymouth, Southampton, Liverpool and I am shortly about to depart for a tour in Scotland: Glasgow, Rosyth, Aberdeen and Orkney.

The breadth of work I've seen gives me huge confidence that the sector is meeting the challenges that we set out in Maritime 2050.

I've been out this morning launching Apprenticeship Week so I haven't seen the Prime Minister's speech just yet, but I know that the PM holds our ambitions to make sure that maritime is at the forefront of our new relationship with the EU.

I have seen that one of the first things he said was "the explosion of global free trade will be down to new maritime technologies".

We are already ahead of the game, we have thought about this, and have a route map in Maritime 2050.

For those of you who don't know this was our first long-term strategy for maritime.

But of course, a strategy has to be delivered and before I can talk about some of our biggest achievements I must take a moment to thank Maritime UK who have been fantastic ambassadors for Maritime 2050.

Every person in this room today has been fundamental to our success. So this afternoon is also a thank you from the department to you.

Let me take you on a journey of what we have achieved so far.

Trade

Our trading relationships are fundamental to the UK's success.

Alongside Maritime 2050 we published the trade route map.

And we now have the DIT led 5-year trade strategy for maritime, which looks at increasing the UK's exports.

To ensure that Free Trade Agreements are in place now that we have left the EU, we've been working with Transport Expert Trade Advisory Groups to make sure we are as competitive and streamlined as we possibly can be.

We committed to considering the case for freeports. I know many of you have discussed this with me over the past few months, and we are close to delivering on this policy.

My job is to ensure what you, the ports sector, want is reflected in the consultation and how we now go forward.

Environment

Moving on to environment.

Maritime 2050 set out our focus on decarbonisation and zero emission shipping.

The landmark agreement at the IMO on greenhouse gas emissions set a global precedent.

And then just last July we published the [Clean Maritime Plan](#).

This makes us one of the first countries to publish a strategy on domestic action to reduce shipping emissions.

Of course, effective and efficient decarbonisation needs innovative thinking.

So we provided £1.5 million to MarRi-UK to launch a clean maritime innovation call.

We will also launch a call for evidence on non-tax economic incentives to promote a transition towards zero emission shipping shortly.

If we are looking to innovation, the UK's strengths in Maritime research and innovation will be crucial to delivering our future ambitions.

We have a clear opportunity to lead the world in the development and introduction of smart shipping technologies.

We have published our Technology and Innovation in UK Maritime route map.

And we are also looking forward to working with industry on their ambitious plans for autonomous Atlantic crossings which are planned for later this

year...

Including MSubs, who I visited in Plymouth. They are crucial in us celebrating the Mayflower's voyage to America as this will be recreated with an autonomous ship.

This work is being supported by the ground-breaking work of the Maritime Autonomy Regulation Lab, MARLab.

We also provided MarRi-UK with £1.5million funding for the Technology and Innovation in UK Maritime call.

This is a real moment in history. Here in the UK we are setting standards for autonomous shipping.

Last July we were proud to launch the first 2050 Innovation Hub at the Port of Tyne.

I'm sure you will hear more about this from Lucy but I would like to offer my personal support to the work already taking place at the hub.

And this was only the start.

Our ambition is to see a network of Innovation Hubs to act as focal points for innovation in their region.

And we will be working incredibly hard for the rest of this year with you to make that happen.

People

Our success above all else relies on our workforce.

And I want to see the UK as pioneering a social framework which will lead the way on an international level.

During London International Shipping Week, we launched the People Route Map, during the careers fair aboard the NLV Pharos – which the Prime Minister himself visited.

The issues we face are not straightforward.

Addressing gender diversity is a key concern of mine.

Women are very much underrepresented in the UK maritime industry. We definitely need to change that.

I'm thrilled to say there are now 122 companies signed up to the Women in Maritime Pledge.

We have also provided £40,000 grant funding for the Maritime and Me campaign, showcasing the exciting and rewarding maritime careers on offer.

And we have also supported the 1851 Trust who are undertaking a roadshow attracting young girls into STEM careers, primarily in maritime and transport.

I was lucky enough to see their roadshow in Belfast a few weeks ago.

We also provided £40,000 to help develop the Institute for Chartered Shipbrokers Introduction to Shipping Programme to younger students, primary age, to ensure they are open to careers available later on down the line.

In the people route map we announced the establishment of a Maritime Skills Commission providing £300,000 pump-priming funding.

And I am thrilled that Professor Graham Baldwin has been appointed as Chair.

Infrastructure

We have many ports representatives here today.

Ports are the keystone of the maritime and freight sector.

Where these ports might have once supported power stations or coal supplies...

They are now embracing the massive opportunities provided by renewable energy and offshore activity.

I was recently at the Port of Blyth and was hugely impressed by their world leading wind turbine facilities.

Ports do not just support the wider economy, but the employment, skills, opportunities and prosperity help regenerate communities.

Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do – and we have set up Port Economic Partnerships and I am very keen that we champion these.

We've made a start, having established one with Southampton Port. I would like to thank Alistair for the work he has done on this.

Port Economic Partnerships had to unfortunately come to a standstill when the election was called but having caught up with him recently in Southampton they are now moving at a very good pace.

Competitive advantage

I am committed to ensuring that the UK remains a world class place to do business.

We need to strengthen our existing offer and seize new opportunities.

Because we are embarking on a new relationship with the EU we recently made £30 million available to support our port infrastructure across the country.

Thinking about our offer on the world stage now more than ever is the UK's

ambitions to be the best performing international flag.

But for me, it is about being the most ethical flag of choice.

We now have 24/7 registration support for customer in place. The MCA is also digitising all of its wider processes.

And taking steps to ensure our flag is and remains to be world class.

Of course, I couldn't stand before you today and not reflect on our hugely successful London International Shipping Week in September.

We all did a brilliant job, in partnership with all of you and particularly Maritime UK and Shipping Innovation...

Showcasing the UK maritime sector to the world.

And of course – successfully we have won the bid to host the Global Maritime Forum in October this year. It's been a huge success, so thank you once again for your support last September.

Our regions have a tremendous amount of potential so we have to encourage and support regional clusters.

On my recent visit to Liverpool I met with Mersey Maritime, and later this week look forward to meeting with the Scottish Maritime Cluster.

Clusters can play a crucial role in regional development and economic growth as well as re-vitalising coastal communities.

If you haven't yet thought about hosting a cluster you must definitely get in touch.

I know that Chris from Mersey Maritime is here today. When I went to visit Plymouth they were incredibly pleased with the support given to them in establishing a cluster, so thank you.

Future priorities

Going forward, my focus will be on upgrading our infrastructure, embracing new technology – and the appetite is there to go further, and maritime has a huge role to play.

Of course, we mustn't forget tackling climate change. It is incredibly vital and is a high priority on this government's agenda.

And as we leave the EU, new opportunities will present themselves – our trading relations and the maritime offer will bolster cross-governmental work.

So, it is clear we have made significant progress on our commitments in Maritime 2050.

But it doesn't do justice to the comprehensive work underway, spanning every corner of the maritime sector.

And of course, we still have so much more to do.

So, 2019 has been a brilliant year, there is no denying it. There have been some challenges but we have been able to manage those.

2020 will be a year not only of change – further challenges – but of absolute choices that we can make together.

The choices we make will have a lasting impact.

And as we continue to ensure that Maritime 2050 is brought to life, I look forward to continuing the work hand in hand going forward.

Someone this afternoon said: "Minister, can we take a break now?" and I said no, we have only just begun!

I'd like to now introduce Lucy Armstrong, from the Port of Tyne, who will speak to us about how Maritime 2050 has influenced their work.

Thank you so much.