

[News story: Better connections to ports to help business growth](#)

Better connections to English ports could help businesses thrive and boost the nation's economy, a new study published today shows (Tuesday, 24 April 2018).

The study of England's port connectivity, launched at the British Port Association annual member's lunch, will help influence funding, policy and planning decisions by highlighting the importance of England's harbours and their global trade links. It also shows how ports can flourish by improving connections to inland businesses

Improved road and rail links can provide more effective freight journeys between key economic areas and ports, boosting productivity, lowering costs and giving access to international markets.

Shipping Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

The nation's ports are crucial to our success, contributing £5.4 billion to our economy.

Shipping is still one of the most efficient way of transporting goods from across the globe into our homes. But the journey doesn't stop at a port. Good connections to distributors and manufacturers are also vital in ensuring that products reach our shelves without delay.

Better links won't just boost imports, but will also support British companies that export products across the globe, helping them exploit new international trade opportunities.

[Promotional video for ports](#)

As the report makes clear, extensive government investment is already improving port access, unlocking private sector investment and economic growth across the country with £235 million invested between 2014 and 2019 to improve rail links and £23 billion to provide better journeys on England's roads.

Alec Don, chairman of British Ports Association, said:

I am delighted that the government has recognised the importance of port connectivity.

UK ports have over £1.7 billion of new private infrastructure investment in the pipeline and the industry relies on there being

good connections onward from the port gate. 95% of UK trade moves by sea and so ensuring that our trading gateways are connected is critical to the ongoing health of our economy.

We hope the government will build on this good work, and future infrastructure and investment planning prioritises the free and efficient movement of freight.

The report also offers a series of recommendations for government and industry on how to raise the profile of shipping, encourage closer collaboration on freight, and improve information-sharing. This will deliver an ambitious vision for the long term future of port connectivity, linking in with the [government's long term strategy, Maritime 2050](#).

James Cooper, chairman of the UK Major Ports Group, said:

The port connectivity study is very welcome. UK Major Ports Group members invest more than half a billion pounds a year in UK ports and infrastructure but for the UK to maximise the value of this investment for the nation these ports need to be well connected to the rest of the economy.

As the UK nears Brexit, it's vital that there is a focus on ensuring that we have the right infrastructure to enable trade. The study's recognition of the need to take a joined up, multi modal approach to key trade enabling freight corridors anchored on major ports is particularly welcome.