

Teesside Freeport open for business

- Teesside Freeport will be at the forefront of local low carbon sector creating thousands of jobs in green energy
- The freeport has estimated it will create more than 18,000 jobs and provide £3.2 billion boost to local communities
- Seven freeports to follow in England including Thames and Humber in due course

Teesside Freeport has begun operations today (19 November 2021) putting the region at the forefront of green energy, manufacturing, and innovation.

It is estimated that the freeport will create more than 18,000 new highly skilled jobs and generate £3.2 billion for the local community over 5 years (1). It will have access to a share of £200 million of government funding to support the region's levelling up ambitions and become the UK's clean energy powerhouse.

Close to the North Sea, Teesside is ideally placed to serve the offshore wind sector and with its excellent transport links it will be a gateway to global markets via air, sea, rail and road.

The freeport has already secured multi-million-pound investment from GE Renewables to build a new offshore wind blade manufacturing plant which they estimate will deliver up to 750 manufacturing jobs and a further 1,500 roles in the supply chain.

These blades will supply the world's biggest offshore wind farm, Dogger Bank, helping to power millions of UK homes, and the government has also committed an additional £20 million to create a new deep-water quay to service the offshore wind industry.

Up to 3 more offshore wind manufacturers could be housed on the site, boosting the UK's offshore and net zero ambitions, and creating thousands of jobs for local people.

The next 2 freeports to become operational will be Thames and Humber. Both have had tax sites designated today and are working at pace to become operational in the near future.

Minister for Levelling Up Neil O'Brien MP said:

I am delighted to see the Teesside Freeport begin operations today, putting the region at the forefront of the UK's drive to net zero and bringing thousands of high-skilled jobs to the area.

Freeports will help to generate prosperity and spread opportunity by driving trade and innovation as we level up in every corner of the United Kingdom.

We're seeing evidence of this in Teesside already with GE Renewable Energy's multimillion pound investment as they bring their new blade manufacturing plant to the site.

Lord Frost, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, said:

Having left the European Union we now have the freedom to do things differently, including setting up new freeports to turbo-charge our trade with the world's fastest growing markets.

Today's announcement is great news for Teesside and it shows that we are maximising the opportunities of Brexit to create well-paid jobs and drive growth right across the UK.

As well as more freeports, we want to go further and faster to create a competitive, regulatory environment which supports innovation and boosts inward investment.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said:

The day has finally come – after years of campaigning and shouting about the transformative potential of a freeport for Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool, we're at last open for business.

We're throwing our doors open to the world, showing businesses that we're a truly outward-looking, international region ready to welcome the cutting-edge sectors of the future. We're already reaping the benefits of the Teesside Freeport with the likes of GE who are creating thousands of good-quality well paid jobs for local workers.

As we lead the UK in the cleaner, safer and healthier industries and jobs of tomorrow, the sky's the limit as to what the Teesside Freeport can achieve.

Councillor Shane Moore, the Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, said:

The sea and our ports have shaped the fortunes of Hartlepool for hundreds of years and it's absolutely fantastic news Teesside Freeport has begun operations today.

I was delighted to play my own part in ensuring the Port of Hartlepool and Able Seaton Port were included in the bid and I believe Freeport status will help harness the power of the Tees Valley's highly skilled workforce, and our established and emerging industrial clusters.

We are continuing to work with other freeports to ensure they reach this important milestone as soon as they are able. Other successful prospective freeports locations include:

- East Midlands Airport
- Felixstowe & Harwich
- Liverpool City Region
- Plymouth & South Devon
- Solent

(1) Source: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/teesside-freeport/>

Freeports are special areas within the UK's borders where different economic regulations apply. Freeports in England are centred around one or more air, rail, or seaport, but can extend up to 45km beyond the port(s). See more information on [Freeports](#).

Covering 4,500 acres, Teesside estimate that it will create more than 18,000 new jobs.

The freeport will also facilitate a world-class, highly skilled workforce specialising in manufacturing, engineering and offshore industries supported by the new [Teesworks Academy](#).

At Budget, in March 2021, the Chancellor announced 8 successful prospective freeports locations in England, as selected following the fair, open and assessment process outlined in the Bidding Prospectus.

Locations selected to progress to the next stages of designation are: East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe & Harwich (known as Freeport East), Humber, Liverpool City Region, Plymouth & South Devon, Solent, Teesside and Thames.

Subject to business case appraisal, they will be able to access a share of £200 million of seed capital funding.

At Budget, in October 2021, the Chancellor announced that the first tax sites will be in Humber, Tees and Thames. Thames and Humber tax sites go live today (19 November 2021).

Eligible businesses that base themselves in tax sites at these freeports can benefit from several tax incentives including: an enhanced Capital Allowance; a Structures and Buildings Allowance; a Business Rates relief; and a Stamp Duty Land Tax relief.

Teesside have also had a customs site designated today (19 November) which means that businesses that base themselves in the site can benefit from the customs facilitations – including tariff suspension, exemption, and deferral.

The government is working hard to support the other prospective freeports. Subject to agreeing their governance arrangements and successfully completing their business cases, we expect the next set of freeports to begin operations from 2022.

The UK government remains committed to establishing its Freeport programme in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as soon as possible and are confident our model embraces the highest employment and environmental standards.

Local councils will be able to retain 100% of business rates growth generated by the freeport tax sites for the next 25 years, providing them with financial security to invest in regeneration in their local area.

Any use of hand-held mobile phone while driving to become illegal

- government strengthening existing laws making it illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving under virtually any circumstance
- follows public consultation which found that 81% of people supported such a move
- highway code will change making it clear that hand-held phone use at traffic lights or in traffic jams is illegal

Police will soon be able to more easily prosecute drivers using a hand-held mobile phone at the wheel after the government strengthens existing laws to further improve road safety.

It is already illegal to text or make a phone call (other than in an emergency) using a hand-held device while driving. Next year, laws will go further to ban drivers from using their phones to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or play games.

This will mean anyone caught using their hand-held device while driving will face a £200 fixed penalty notice and 6 points on their licence.

Drivers will still be able to continue using a device 'hands-free' while driving, such as a sat-nav, if it's secured in a cradle. They must, however, always take responsibility for their driving and can be charged with an offence if the police find them not to be in proper control of their vehicle.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Too many deaths and injuries occur while mobile phones are being held.

By making it easier to prosecute people illegally using their phone at the wheel, we are ensuring the law is brought into the 21st century while further protecting all road users.

While our roads remain among the safest in the world, we will

continue working tirelessly to make them safer, including through our award-winning [THINK! campaign](#), which challenges social norms among high-risk drivers.

This follows a [public consultation](#) that found 81% of respondents supported proposals to strengthen the law and make it easier for culprits to be prosecuted.

Following the public consultation, the government will revise [The Highway Code](#) to explain the new measures. It will also be more precise about the fact that being stationary in traffic counts as driving, making it clear that hand-held mobile phone use at traffic lights or in motorway jams is illegal except in very limited circumstances.

There will be an exemption to the new law for drivers making a contactless payment using their mobile phone while stationary to ensure the law keeps pace with technology.

This exemption will cover, for example, places like a drive-through restaurant or a road toll, and will only apply when payment is being made with a card reader. It will not allow motorists to make general online payments while driving.

Mary Williams OBE, Chief Executive of Brake – the road safety charity, said:

Driver distraction can be deadly and using a hand-held phone at the wheel is never worth the risk. This important road safety decision by government, coinciding with [Road Safety Week](#), is very welcomed.

This news is particularly welcomed by families suffering bereavement and catastrophic injury due to drivers being distracted by phones. The theme for Road Safety Week is road safety heroes – we can all be road safety heroes by giving driving our full attention.

The Department for Transport has also today published a [study by Ipsos Mori about drivers who use mobile phones while driving](#).

Among other findings, the research reveals younger motorists are more likely to have used a handheld device at the wheel, supporting the focus of the government's award-winning THINK! campaign, which works to boost road safety by targeting higher-risk, younger motorists and road-users.

UK and Poland collaborate on multi-billion pound Polish air defence systems

A first for the UK-Poland relationship, the Statement of Intent will see the two countries share pioneering technology to develop NAREW, Poland's future Ground-Based Air Defence System, which is anticipated to have a multi-billion-pound budget.

The agreement will provide enhanced security and defence development for both countries, while developing and sustaining critical skills across the missile sector in Poland and the UK.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

This agreement will deliver a step change in our defence co-operation with Poland and paves the way for our militaries to operate even more closely.

Minister Błaszczak and I look forward to seeing the GBAD partnership develop.

Britain and Poland have historically stood side by side against a range of threats and will continue to deepen our partnership.

In the UK, MBDA's Common Anti-air Modular Missile (Camm) family has been confirmed for the NAREW programme. Flying at supersonic speeds, Camm missiles can destroy modern air threats including stealth aircraft and high-speed missiles. Each Camm family missile is equipped with an advanced active radar seeker that can see even the smallest, fastest and stealthiest targets through the worst weather and the heaviest electronic jamming.

Chris Allam, Managing Director MBDA UK:

MBDA is delighted to be playing such a leading role in the UK-Poland Defence partnership. This agreement endorses the deep relationship we have formed with Poland's Ministry of National Defence and Polish Industry and is underpinned by the nature of our unprecedented technology co-operation and transfer proposal for NAREW and Polish Air Defence.

In choosing MBDA, and the Camm family, Poland will receive the benefits of a true European missile partnership, the latest capabilities, and the ability to secure and develop highly skilled jobs in its defence industry. We thank Poland for the trust placed in us and we look forward to delivering this programme in co-

operation with PGZ.

The Statement of Intent was signed during the Defence Secretary's visit to Poland where he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to European defence and security and NATO Allies. The Defence Ministers visited personnel in Bemowe Piskie Camp, Orzysz, where the UK Armed Forces are serving alongside Polish and other NATO Allies as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

The Defence Secretary and Minister Blaszczak also discussed the current situation along Poland's border with Belarus. The Defence Secretary affirmed UK support for Poland, and the UK's firm condemnation the Lukashenko regime's attempt to engineer a migration crisis to undermine Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. He confirmed the UK will continue to offer practical support through the deployment of UK military engineers to provide engineering technical and liaison assistance and wider engineering support to Polish military personnel deployed at the border.

Poland and the UK are both investing in improving capabilities and in modernising our Armed Forces, exceeding NATO's Defence spending target of 2% of GDP. The bilateral relationship between the nations is strong, with forces operating side by side on land, at sea and in the air. Endeavours to work together to face shared challenges are underpinned by the Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty signed in 2017.

Avanti House School showcases their Combined Cadet Force

The school's CCF, formed in 2019, gave demonstrations assisted by the London District Cadet Training Team.

The cadet experience provides young people, irrespective of faith, with valuable skills such as teamwork and first aid, and will benefit them later in life and as they apply for university and jobs.

Avanti House, part of the Avanti School Trust, opened their doors to Baroness Goldie as an opportunity to showcase the excellent work in forming a CCF contingent. The contingent was formed as part of the Ministry of Defence and Department for Education's Cadet Expansion Programme and now boasts nearly 40 enrolled cadets.

Minister for Defence for the House of Lords, Baroness Goldie said:

It was an absolute privilege to visit Avanti House and see young people clearly enjoying their educational experience.

The value of the Combined Cadet Force is that it gives young people an opportunity to be taken out of their comfort zone and learn the values of being part of a team, which will see them well into adulthood and I congratulate Avanti House for their great work.

Avanti House school formed their CCF contingent in 2019 and have successfully managed to maintain their programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group is led by the contingent commander Lieutenant Charl Weyers, and a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer Second Lieutenant Christopher Smith, both are teachers at the school. They are further supported by the School Staff Instructor Colour Sergeant David Sigona.

As part of the visit from Baroness Goldie, the cadets demonstrated a command task which involved working as a team to successfully erect a structure. They also went through a first aid lesson. Each event was followed by an opportunity for the cadets to speak with Baroness Goldie and talk about why they joined the cadets, and how they think it has benefited their overall educational experience at Avanti House.

The Baroness was joined on the visit by Lieutenant Colonel Ashok Rao, Chair of the Defence Hindu Network, and Major Neeraj Shah, Vice-chair of the Defence Hindu Network. Both work closely with Avanti house and have run several events in conjunction with the school, including a lively debate with guest speakers. The network seeks to educate British Hindus on the Armed Forces whilst providing support to those serving.

Chairman of the Defence Hindu Network, Lieutenant Colonel Ashok Rao said:

I am a really strong believer in the cadets having benefitted from being part of the organisation myself. We are keen to support cadet contingents, especially ones at a faith school such as this, to demonstrate meaningful representation that the cadets can identify with.

There aren't a large number of British Hindus in Defence and we are committed to supporting efforts to increase representation through our network.

The CCF programme at Avanti House has been granted approval to grow their numbers to 50 over the next year. The benefits of a CCF programme within schools was made evident by the 4-year longitudinal study, published this year, by the University of Northampton into the social impact of cadet forces. The study concluded that life skills gained by the cadet experience can improve behaviour and attitude at school, employability and social mobility.

British Embassy Yerevan's office building lit up in green

World news story

On 12 November, the British Embassy in Yerevan lit up Kamar building in green to mark the conclusion of the COP26 Climate Change Conference.



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On 12 November, the Kamar Business Centre, home to the British Embassy in Yerevan, was lit up in green to mark the conclusion of the [COP26 Climate Change Conference](#), co-hosted by the UK in Glasgow, from 31 October to 12 November.

Climate change is the greatest global risk facing us all. The 26th annual Climate Change Conference – known as the Conference of Parties, or COP26 – was hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, representing the world's best opportunity to get climate change under control. The Conference brought together around 120 world leaders and tens of thousands of experts, government representatives, businesses and citizens from around the world to drive forward the urgent action needed to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The UK is committed to tackling climate change, and has been engaging closely with all countries, including Armenia, to set ambitious commitments and targets to limit global warming.

The UK was delighted to welcome the Armenian Delegation, led by President Armen Sarkissian, to COP26. We welcome the ambitious goals set by the Government of Armenia to tackle climate change as set out in their Nationally Determined Contributions.

On the last day of COP26, the British Embassy in Yerevan, in collaboration with Kamar Business Centre, lit up the office building in green to highlight the joint global efforts on climate action and green growth.

The British Embassy selected Kamar Business Centre due to its status as the first building in Armenia to be certified by BREEAM (the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). BREEAM was developed by British BRE Global Company, and is used to assess standards of eco-efficiency and sustainability. The British Embassy in Armenia is delighted to collaborate with Kamar Business Centre to symbolically highlight the importance of green growth through the lighting of the building. We thank our partners in Kamar for sponsoring this initiative.

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