

Welsh Secretary visits Milford Haven Port as UK Government lays out Freeport plans to boost the economy

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart visited Milford Haven Port Authority to discuss the freeport consultation launched today (Monday 10 Feb) by the UK Government.

The consultation will look into the creation of new national hubs of business and enterprise which will be opened across the UK. The hubs are expected to create thousands of jobs, regenerate communities and turbocharge Britain's growth.

Up to ten new innovative freeports will be opened across the UK as the UK Government seeks to seize on the opportunities leaving the EU has presented.

A consultation has been launched with the aim of announcing the location of the new zones at the end of next year so they can be open for business in 2021.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The development of freeports will create innovation hubs across the UK, generating new ideas in a whole host of UK sectors from customs to transport to decarbonisation.

A freeport in Wales could create hundreds of jobs and facilitate significant regional economic growth. That is why I urge businesses to engage with our consultation and help us to unleash our potential in innovation, investment and growth. Working closely with the Welsh Government and businesses, we will ensure that the whole of the UK can feel the benefits as this government delivers its manifesto commitments.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rishi Sunak, said:

Freeports will unleash the potential in our proud historic ports, boosting and regenerating communities across the UK as we level up. They will attract new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country.

This is all part of our mission as an open, outward-looking country, championing global free trade with vibrant freeports that work for all of the UK.

Freeports will also offer an exciting opportunity for cutting-edge customs, transport and green technologies to be trialled in controlled environments, before being adopted more widely in relevant sectors of the economy. The UK Government will work in close partnership with the devolved administrations so that all nations of the UK are able to share in the benefits of freeports.

Benefits of the 2020 Freeports model could include:

- Goods brought into a Freeport do not attract tariffs until they leave the Freeport and enter the domestic market.
- No duty is payable if they are re-exported.
- When raw materials are imported and processed into a final good, duties are only paid on the final good.
- Freeports could be located inland as well as adjacent to ports. This can reduce relocation or investment costs for existing manufacturing sites near ports.
- A full customs declaration would not be required to move goods into a Freeport. This saves businesses time and makes it easier to import goods.
- Planning reforms to help sea ports develop within their boundaries and empower local councils to greenlight much-needed local construction projects
- A regeneration agenda to level up the local areas around freeports
- Innovative environments to trial new technologies
- Challenge-based initiatives to build collaborative partnerships between ports, businesses and innovators

In addition, the UK Government is considering tax measures that aim to: * increase investment in infrastructure, construction and machinery in freeports to raise productivity

- incentivise research to stimulate innovation in freeports
- cut costs associated with processing goods through a port

- reduce the costs of hiring workers working in freeport sites

The UK's high standards with respect to security, safety, workers' rights, and the environment will not be compromised.

Once the [10-week consultation](#) is completed, the UK Government will invite sea air and rail ports to bid for Freeport status on a competitive basis.