

Boost for Thames Estuary as Freeport opens for business

- Thames Freeport expects to create 21,000 jobs and provide £2.5 billion boost to local economy, helping to level up the country
- The freeport will be a leading player in the UK's green energy revolution and bring industry together with local schools, colleges and universities
- The opening comes just weeks after the UK's first freeport opened in Teesside

Thames Freeport has opened for business today (15 December 2021), as the government delivers on its central mission to level up across the United Kingdom.

The freeport estimates it will draw £4.5 billion of new investment and create 21,000 skilled jobs, bringing greater prosperity to some of the country's most deprived communities.

Positioned on the doorstep of the UK's busiest ports and largest labour market of London and the south east, the freeport will create a new global gateway for trade and benefit communities such as Thurrock, Barking, Dagenham and Havering, which have high rates of unemployment and child poverty.

The launch comes just weeks after the UK's [first freeport opened for business in Teesside](#).

Thames Freeport covers a 34 km-wide economic corridor and is supported by a share of £200 million of government funding and tax incentives.

The freeport will be a world class hub of innovation and put the region at the forefront of the cutting-edge sectors of the future, with significant investment in hydrogen technology, battery storage and electric vehicles.

A new Thames Freeport Skills Accelerator will also bring industry together with local schools, colleges and universities to provide training and job opportunities so that local people can gain the skills they need and secure employment.

Minister for Levelling Up Neil O'Brien MP said:

This is a truly exciting and momentous moment for London and the south east.

Thames Freeport will turbocharge the region's green energy credentials, inject billions into the economy and help level up by creating jobs and opportunities for local talent.

Ford's Dagenham site is a great example of how British businesses

will directly benefit and help to put our country at the forefront of the industries of the future.

Ruth Kelly, Chair of Thames Freeport, said:

The Thames Freeport will be a new centre of excellence for the country.

The Thames Freeport partners come together to offer a platform for global Britain.

The freeport provides Ford with a great opportunity as a test bed for customer-focused mobility technologies; London Gateway has fantastic global connections and land ready for development now; while the Port of Tilbury continues to deliver growth across processing, advanced manufacturing and next generation logistics.

At the Budget in March 2021, the Chancellor announced 8 successful prospective freeports locations in England, following a fair and open and assessment process. These include:

- East Midlands Airport
- Felixstowe & Harwich (known as Freeport East)
- Humber
- Liverpool City Region
- Plymouth & South Devon
- Solent
- Teesside
- Thames

Teesside Freeport opened for business in November and has a specific focus on green energy and offshore wind power.

Freeport East, including the ports of Felixstowe & Harwich, will begin initial operations later this month as eligible businesses that base themselves in the tax site start to benefit from tax incentives.

The government is continuing to work with other freeports to ensure they reach this important milestone as soon as they are able.

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