



**04 FEBRUARY 2021**

### **Launch of *Short Straits to Smart Straits***

*Transforming the Short Straits into the UK's most innovative high speed, low carbon trading gateway*

Today, we have proposed an exciting new initiative to Government ('Short Straits to Smart Straits') that will harness and transform the unique benefits of the Short Straits gateways for the long-term economic prosperity of the nation in a post-EU, low-to-no-carbon future.

Whilst fully supportive of the Government's Freeports ambitions, we have determined that the tightly defined geographic and site-based approach does not allow us to maximise the advantages of our particular role in fast-paced national supply chains and therefore have presented a parallel opportunity outside of, but complementary to, Freeports.

In amplifying its wider Freeports vision, we have brought together a powerful coalition to drive the Government's key innovation agenda as a platform on which to develop two key workstreams.

Together with the Government, we will develop the world's smartest border through 'dynamic digital optimisation', the harnessing of real-time and secure data acquisition, handling, interrogation and visibility that will help remove border frictions and create a world-leading virtual border solution for the Government's 2025 UK Border Strategy that works not only for the Short Straits but nationwide.

We will also pursue our goal to pioneer the UK's first zero emissions logistics corridors, linking with the Government's important sustainability agenda to build back better through its Green Industrial Revolution and Maritime 2050. Working with the Government, this will provide a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate how Britain is a world leader in developing green freight solutions ahead of COP26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference being hosted by the UK in November.

These workstreams will support regeneration and the levelling up agenda across the whole of the UK by supporting manufacturing in strategic industries through greater supply chain resilience and fluidity, and a reduced carbon footprint. The development of high value economic clusters specialising in green mobility and smart freight solutions will also help drive necessary inward investment and employment more locally within East Kent.

Today we call upon the Government to work with us to help achieve a green freight revolution that removes friction and delivers fast-paced and sustainable economic opportunity across the nation.

Doug Bannister, Chief Executive, Port of Dover, said: "The Chancellor's Freeports vision has been the catalyst for creating such a wide body of shared interest and expertise in driving forward a transformational approach to the future of just-in-time logistics in the UK. Working with the Government, this initiative could benefit businesses large and small across the nation to help them operate more efficiently at a time when they are having to navigate through the economic impacts of the pandemic and adapt to a post-Brexit trading environment whilst also moving to a more sustainable future."

John Keefe, Director of Public Affairs, Getlink, said: "With its high volume, fast and frequent services, the Short Straits is the gateway for 90% of UK truck freight trade with Europe, worth around £250 billion per year. This innovative proposal, from a powerful coalition of innovators, transport operators and industry across the UK, sets out to develop zero carbon logistics corridors linking to key industrial hubs across the UK and harness the smart technology that will enable the UK to succeed in dynamic global supply chains."



## Notes to Editors

1. 'Short Straits to Smart Straits' is an initiative that brings together a coalition of transport operators, innovators and industry partners seeking to engage directly with Government to implement a transformative programme of technology-driven solutions that will ensure the future resilience and adaptability of the Short Straits gateway.
2. The Short Straits gateways, consisting of the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel (Getlink):
  - a. occupy a unique strategic location at the critical trading intersection with the UK's main trading partner and global trade routes
  - b. provide the quickest and most frequent services, supporting just-in-time supply chains across the United Kingdom:
  - c. handle £250 billion of trade, half of which serves the Midlands and North
  - d. handle 50% of the UK's trade in goods with Europe
  - e. are two of the largest employers within our communities, supporting over 25,000 jobs in the region.