



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dehenna Davison MP
Minister for Levelling Up
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Brian Johnson
Chair, Solent Freeport
Solent LEP
C/O Paris Smith
1 London Road
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7th December 2022

Dear Brian,

Freeports: Solent receives final government approval

I am delighted to inform you that Solent is one of the first UK Freeports to get fully up-and-running after receiving final government approval. It is a testament to the strong local partnerships and determined collaboration across the private and public sectors in Solent that they have reached this incredible milestone.

As you know, Freeports are a cornerstone of the government's plan to Level Up the country. This significant landmark is an important step on the Freeports journey and sends a clear message: the UK Government is backing these places as a key part of its economic strategy. Solent Freeport will now receive £25 million of seed funding and potentially hundreds of millions in locally retained business rates to upgrade local infrastructure and stimulate regeneration. This is alongside a generous package of trade and innovation support for businesses locating there.

This will allow Solent to grow its vast maritime economy, making the Solent a thriving hub for the world's marine and maritime sector. This will enable a package of investments at the Port of Southampton to enhance operational efficiency and capacity and a new 500,000 sq. ft of business space at Navigator Quarter, which will benefit from excellent air, road, sea and rail connectivity.

And this is only the beginning of the journey – we will now work closely your Freeport to ensure it has the support it needs from Government to deliver transformational benefits for the local area. We continue to deliver the wider programme at pace, and we expect to announce that the remaining English Freeports have received final approvals in the coming months. We will also shortly be announcing the locations of two Green Freeports in Scotland, as well as at least one Freeport in Wales. Finally, we continue to hold discussions with stakeholders in Northern Ireland about how we can extend the benefits associated with the Freeport programme there.

Freeports will bring opportunity and prosperity to the communities that need it most. We want to raise awareness of these benefits, at home and globally, and challenge some common

misperceptions about Freeports. If you would like to be involved and support your Freeport and the wider Freeport programme, please get in touch with my office.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dehenna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DEHENNA DAVISON MP