



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

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Minister for Levelling Up
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London
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Julia Lopez MP
House of Commons
London
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20th March 2023

Dear Julia,

Thames Freeport receives final government approval

I am glad to inform you that Thames Freeport has received final government approval. This is an important landmark for Thames Freeport and the wider Freeport programme, as we near final approval of all English Freeports have been approved. This sends a clear message: the Government is backing these areas to grow and prosper.

As you know, Freeports are at the forefront of levelling up and a key part of this Government's economic strategy. Thames Freeport will now receive up to £25 million seed funding over the coming years, and potentially hundreds of millions in locally retained business rates to upgrade local infrastructure and stimulate regeneration. This is alongside generous tax reliefs and a simplified customs procedure, all backed by a package of trade and innovation support for businesses locating there.

This will allow Thames to build on its global shipping connections and proximity to Europe's largest consumer market by catalysing investment into the region's ports and doubling their capacity. The Thames Freeport will enable multi-modal transit onto the UK's networks, including connections to the A13/M25, national rail network, and the ability to take goods off road and on river to London wharves. This will nurture the supportive ecosystem with South Essex and Thames Estuary business parks and ensure complementary investment in supply chain industries.

This is only the beginning of the journey - we will now work closely with Thames Freeport to ensure it has the support it needs from government to deliver transformational benefits for the local area.

This is a hugely exciting time for the Freeports programme. Further to this latest development in England, we have also recently announced two successful Green Freeports in Scotland and we will be announcing the outcome from the Welsh competition in the coming months. Discussions continue with our 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 Thames 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 script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'D' being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the name.

DEHENNA DAVISON MP