

## British Ports Association Budget Briefing



### **Budget Statement and port connectivity.**

Ahead of this week's Budget Statement, the British Ports Association is calling on the Chancellor to prioritise transport infrastructure spending and to ensure that port connectivity schemes are not overlooked. The UK's transport network facilitates the movement of significant volumes of freight and allows British business and industry to compete and the economy to grow. Much of this freight passes through ports, which handle 95% of the UK's international trade.

Commenting prior to the Budget on Wednesday, the British Ports Association's Chief Executive, Richard Ballantyne said:

***"We await the Chancellor's Statement with interest and are hopeful that this will include some investment for the UK's transport infrastructure and links to ports. In the current political and economic climate ports can stimulate growth, often in deprived regions. Collectively the UK's diverse network of ports and terminals handle almost 500m tonnes of freight each year. They do however rely on good hinterland connections to facilitate this traffic. We have been working with the Department for Transport and feeding into its Port Connectivity Study to identify issues and areas of need.***

***The vast majority of hinterland port traffic is transported by HGVs so road investment is essential. We also should not underestimate the possibility for increased rail freight connectivity and indeed the often overlooked opportunities for coastal shipping, in which the current Government appears to have lost interest. Big ticket passenger transport schemes have been a Government priority in recent years but freight capacity issues need to be addressed and targeted investment should be strongly considered. Furthermore, as ports are often in areas of deprivation, targeted investment will also be helpful to these regions."***

On Brexit Mr Ballantyne also said:

***"The freight industry relies on swift trade facilitation and transport efficiencies. Depending upon the type of Brexit we have there could be new bureaucratic cross-border requirements such as customs and environmental checks. These could impact a number of ports, particularly the sizeable levels of UK-EU 'roll-on roll-off' HGV port traffic.***

***It is important therefore that the Government ensures that road and rail links are as efficient as possible to help freight, and indeed passengers, entering and leaving the country via our ports so that is as efficient as is possible. This means the 'last mile' between the port and trunk and local authority roads and also the wider rail network need to be of a good standard and provide sufficient capacity."***

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**Additionally...**

Separately the Chancellor is expected to outline investment and planning reform to help stimulate UK house building. Although not directly related to ports, these developments will need construction materials, much of which will need to be imported. The British Ports Association has also been pushing for the streamlining of the terrestrial and marine planning systems to help ports develop and grow. This will not require huge sums of money but it will need a degree of political aspiration from policy makers.

Other potential Budget announcements about autonomous vehicles have also been profiled in the media. As this area of policy progresses it will be interesting to see what the implications might mean for the road haulage industry in and what this will mean for ports in the medium and longer term.

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