

**FREEPORT  
EAST**

**FELIXSTOWE  
GATEWAY 14  
HARWICH**

A GLOBAL FREEPORT FOR A GLOBAL BRITAIN

Building the future  
**UK Freeports**

# Freeport East Ltd Business Plan 2025 – 2026

[www.freeporteast.com](http://www.freeporteast.com)



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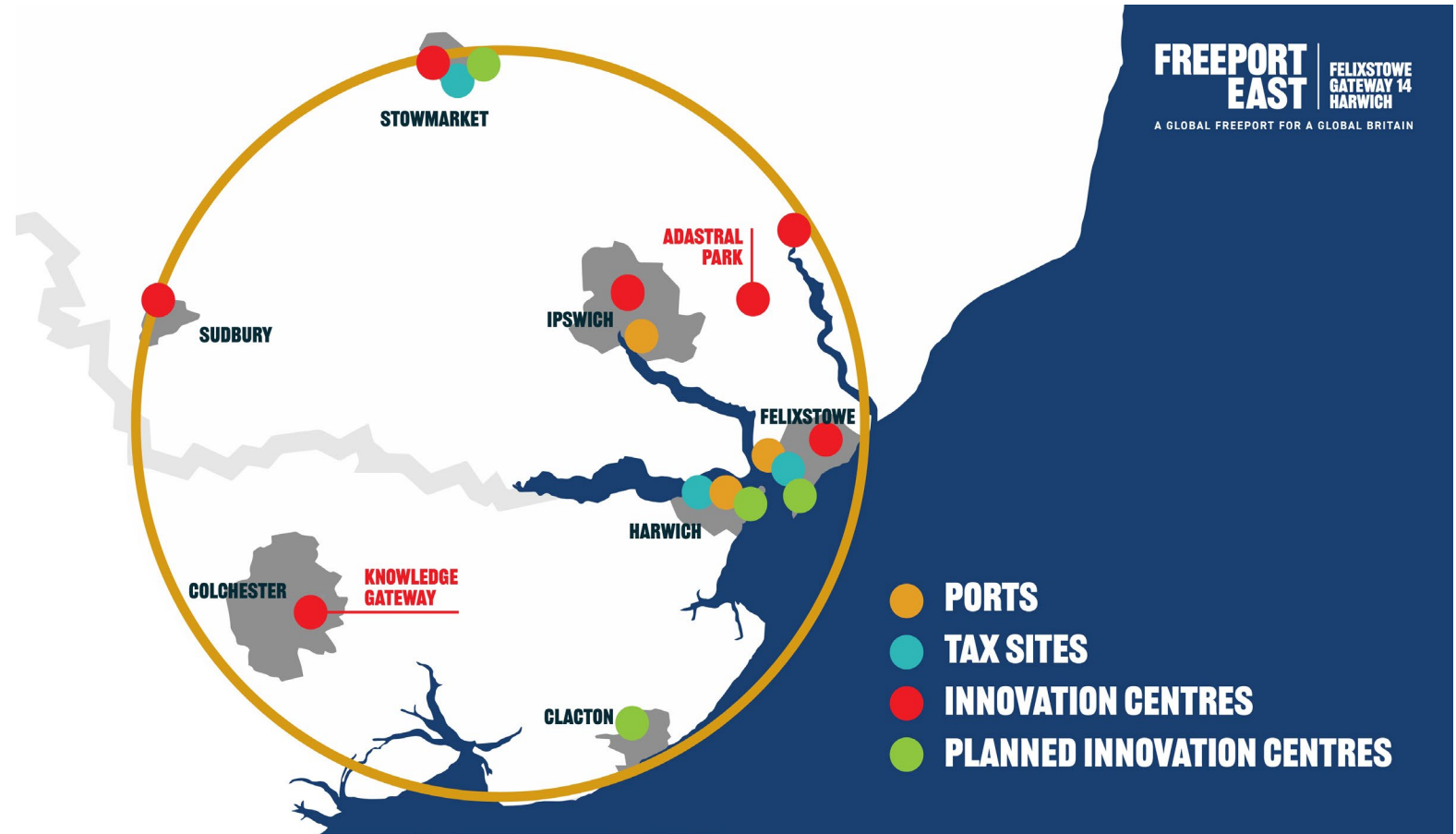
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# 1.0 STRENGTHENING THE REGION WITH BENEFITS FOR ALL

Freeport East is designed to be a key driver in creating opportunities for all across Suffolk and Essex, as well as the wider East of England – helping to tackle those inequalities and barriers that impact on job opportunities, access to education, health outcomes and more.

A full test of the success of Freeport East will not only be judged in terms of inward investment and job creation figures, but also our ability to impact on these inequalities and specific areas of deprivation.

We endeavour to retain a balance between our focus on the collective economic strengthening of the freeport region, whilst targeting change in known areas of deprivation to ensure our impact is felt in places of greatest need.



## 2.0 VISION AND PURPOSE

### 4.1 What is Freeport East

Freeport East is one of 12 Freeports across the UK. It is designed to be a hub for global trade and national regeneration as well as creating a hotbed for innovation that will have an impact across the UK.

With its unique global links and existing innovative sectoral clusters, Freeport East will attract inward international investment and drive domestic growth, propelling the country's economy forward.

Covering Britain's busiest container port, a major ferry port and the largest business, innovation and logistics park in East Anglia, Freeport East offers a unique combination of advantages to benefit traders, manufacturers and clean energy suppliers, creating 13,500 new jobs and generating a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion.

Freeport East received final Government approvals in January 2023, triggering the release of specific funding support and enabling kick-off of wider activities and communications.

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### 4.2 Our Vision

Freeport East aspires to be the UK's leading centre for trade, green energy and innovation - a Global Freeport for a Global Britain.

We will deliver unique opportunities for investment, business-led growth and innovation that will deliver benefits at the local, national and international level

### 4.3 Key Priorities for 2025/2026

1. Develop Freeport East Ltd as a high performing organisation
2. Deliver an ambitious vision for Freeport East
3. Deliver Investment
4. Make the most of our visibility and voice

### 4.4 The role of Freeport East Ltd

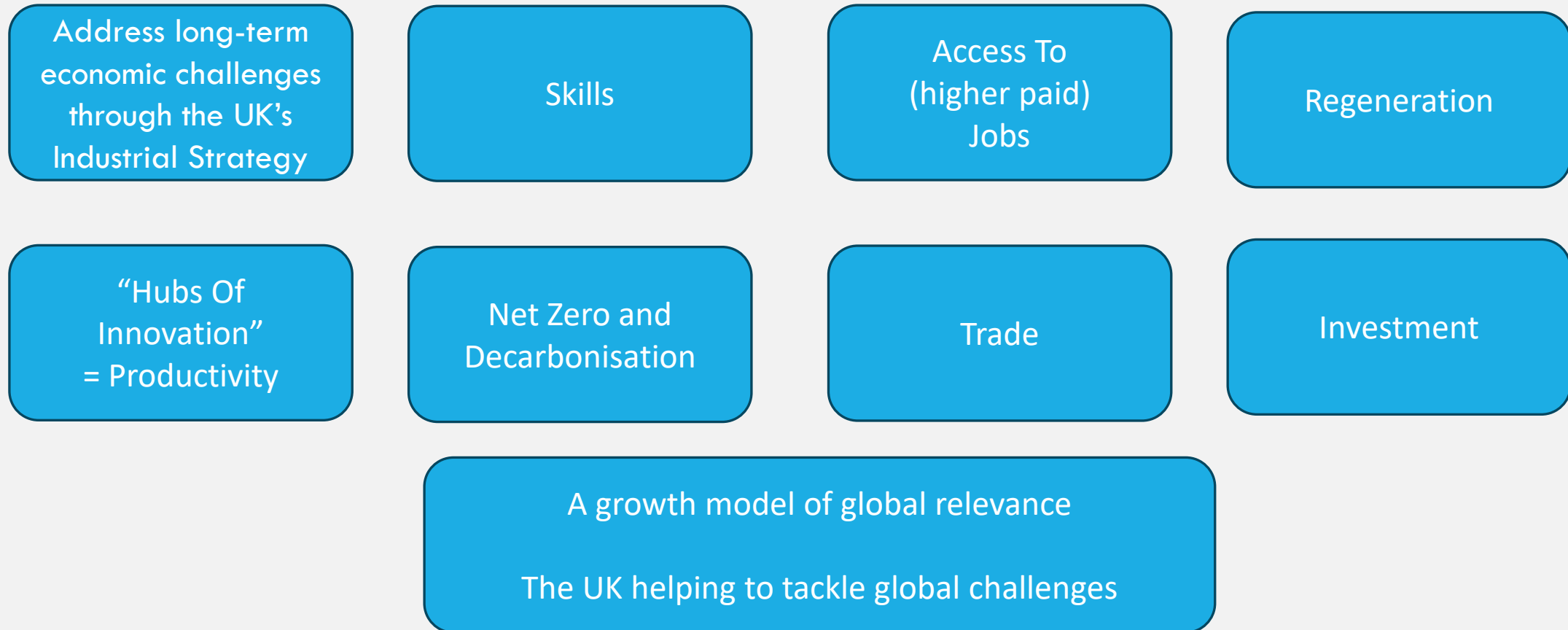
Freeport East Ltd was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in December 2022 and established by a range of local public and private partners to act as the main counterpart to Government for delivery of the freeport policy for Freeport East.

Areas of our role include:

- Facilitating skills, innovation, net zero, trade and investment and regeneration within the freeport boundary through development of plans aligned to partner strategies, project proposals and securing funding for projects
- Facilitating delivery of tax and customs sites, monitoring site infrastructure progress and supporting Tax Site owners in their development of plans to secure funding
- Working with partners to support regional and economic growth in the Freeport East area
- Monitoring and reporting on the performance of Freeport East
- To promote Freeport East opportunities to local, national and international investors and engage with local communities and stakeholders within the freeport boundary to raise awareness of the freeport's vision and objectives
- Maximise the benefits of the full freeport toolkit

## 3.0 UK FREEPORT POLICY OBJECTIVES

Freeports in the UK are designed to contribute to delivering across a range of different policy areas.



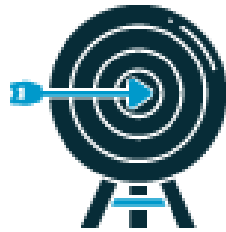


## 4.0 OUR AMBITIONS

### Freeport East aims to deliver:



3 new development sites designed to influence wider **economic change**



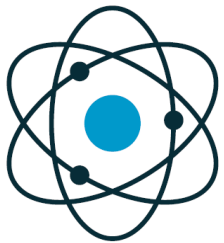
**275 hectares** of new business, innovation and employment space



**13,500** Higher Level Jobs created



Greater access for **everyone** to employment and education opportunities



New centres and resources for **innovation** and **skills** delivery



**£5.5 billion** in economic growth



Up to **£300m** of business rates over 25 years ploughed into the local economy

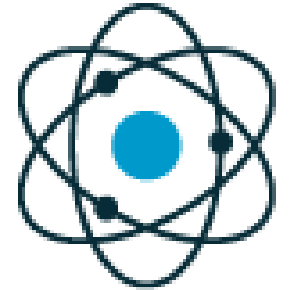


New **economic opportunities** For our whole region

## 5.0 INNOVATION AT THE HEART OF FREEPORT EAST

- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) recognises innovation as “the application of knowledge of ideas for the development of products, services or processes - whether in business, public services, or non-profit sectors”.
- Innovation doesn’t have to be high-tech or even new - it can be the adoption, adaption or application of existing innovations that are not presently being exploited in a particular organisation, sector or geography.
- Economies and regions that are innovative tend to create more and higher-paying jobs, are more resilient to economic change, place themselves at the forefront of new opportunities and create greater economic value.
- A more innovative Freeport East region will therefore create a range of benefits for local communities and businesses and position it more effectively for the opportunities and challenges of the future.

- The Government has set Freeports the challenge of becoming “hubs of innovation” and we have placed it at the centre of how we are seeking to deliver the vision of Freeport East.
- Freeport East already has many amazing local assets to support innovation, including world-class universities and research institutes, internationally-recognised centres of excellence in areas such as clean energy, telecoms, Artificial Intelligence and agri-tech, full of trail-blazing SMEs and start-ups and well-established corporate innovation leaders.
- Our job is to work with a range of partners to make more of these assets, strengthen connections and access to funding and then ensure the benefits in terms of employment, skills and applications of innovation are shared across our communities.



## 5.1 OUR APPROACH TO INNOVATION



We will focus on four separate areas to deliver on this ambition to be the most innovation-driven UK Freeport

### FUND

#### 1. Increase public and private sector innovation spending in the Freeport East area

We will proactively facilitate the creation and support of industry / academic collaborations to secure innovation funds. We will allocate Freeport East funds to support businesses to innovate and drive growth. We will use our access to Government and private firms to maximise opportunities for local businesses.

### CONNECT

#### 2. Strengthen the physical and virtual places and connections that aid innovation thinking and activity

Freeport East will deliver new innovation centres and strengthen the connections between innovation centres. We will work with both HE & FE institutions and Local Authorities. As a vital new node of the Connected Innovation Network, we will provide local businesses with better opportunities to network, innovate, grow and succeed.

### ATTRACT

#### 3. Use innovation as an anchor for attracting new investment to Freeport East

We will showcase opportunities in new sectors to attract new businesses into our region. We will ensure that inward investors can link into existing innovation networks and build a new dedicated Freeport East Innovation Cluster.

### DEPLOY

#### 4. Facilitate the deployment of innovations to drive productivity and tackle social/economic disparities

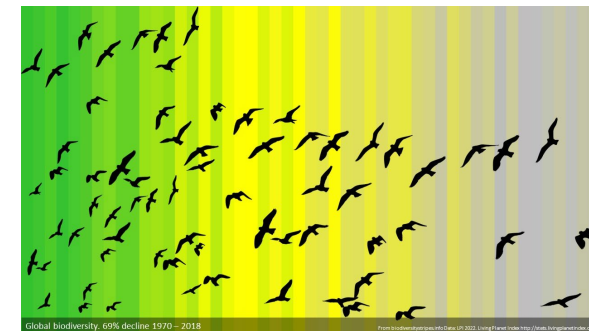
We will explore how new innovations in mobility, clean energy, healthcare and education can be connected into local service delivery. We will work with national bodies to enhance local impact, including Innovate UK Business Growth, Innovate UK Business Connect, selected Catapults, DWP, and the third sector.





## 6.0 DELIVERING THE UK'S GREENEST FREEPORT

- Freeport East has an important role to help drive our region towards net zero. We believe this reflects the interests of all our local stakeholders as well as playing an important role in supporting UK Government policy.
- Delivering against net zero creates competitive advantage for inward investment for Freeport East, Suffolk, Essex and the wider East of England region.
- Our existing corporate partners, as well as many other businesses in the region, already have very strong commitments on net zero and biodiversity (e.g. Hutchison Ports, Gateway 14 Ltd and other developments such as Port One).
- Many of our priority, high-growth sectors align with the industry response to net zero ambitions, including areas such as green hydrogen, offshore wind, zero-emission vehicles and local energy solutions (e.g. maximising rooftop solar for new developments).
- Our communities and local authorities are at the forefront of recognising and delivering on sustainability and rightly expect us to be ambitious and creative on biodiversity and sustainable growth.
- Freeport East, through inward investment activity and international partnerships provides a significant opportunity to influence current and new employers and inward investors on net zero ambitions as well as strengthening export opportunities for local businesses.
- Net zero, decarbonisation and clean technologies are at the heart of presenting our region as a modern economic model of global relevance – balancing the needs of people and the environment and understanding our local role in global challenges.
- Playing our role in enabling our region to deliver net zero objectives is therefore a key part of our approach. As well as delivering investments and infrastructure that support net zero sectors, we will look to be ambitious in how we can support our local authorities in delivering their own climate change plans, building partnerships in areas such as biodiversity and ensuring green skills are a core part of how we will help local communities benefit from the changing economy around us.



# 7.0 HOW WE WORK

## 7.1 OUR STRUCTURE

We are governed by a Supervisory Board, which is our principal decision-making body. It makes decisions on our core plans and strategies. The board is comprised of 11 directors which includes our founding members and is led by an independent chair, supported by the Chief Executive of Freeport East Ltd.

The Supervisory Board also includes observers, who provide advice and support to the Board, including East Suffolk Council as the Accountable Body and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Board can invite other organisations to become Associate Members – organisations which are not founding members, but subsequently become a member of the company to assist Freeport East Ltd in realising its vision and objectives.

All meeting dates, papers, agendas and minutes of Board meetings are available at [www.freeporteast.co.uk](http://www.freeporteast.co.uk).

## 7.2 SUB-GROUPS

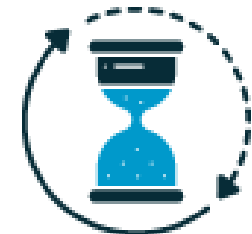
We will work with a coalition of stakeholders to deliver our work programme, leading the following sub-groups:

- Inward Investment
- Transport
- Skills

## 7.3 OUR WIDER PARTNERSHIP

Our wider partnership includes a wide range of businesses, education providers and partnership groups, including Transport East and skills bodies.

We will organise events and outreach to strengthen our connections with local stakeholders and ensure we broaden the understanding of how Freeport East can support and work with businesses and communities.



# 7.1 HOW WE WORK

The role of Freeport East Ltd is multi-faceted and varied. We seek to deliver effectively across five key areas:

## Lead Strategic Thinking

- Strategic direction and thought leadership for delivering the full vision of Freeport East
- Lead development of studies and strategies relevant to the Freeport East geography and vision
- Connect local opportunities for our people and businesses to regional, national and international trends and movements

## Act as Counterpart to Government

- Be accountable to Government on delivery of the Freeport objectives
- Lobby for appropriate support across Government departments and Whitehall
- Monitor and evaluate performance across the freeport

## Lead and Facilitate investment and funding mechanisms

- Targeting and managing efficient funding processes for business rates income
- Engage with and secure potential investors for our sites and region
- Position investment opportunities in our region to maximise public and private sector investment
- Accelerate outcomes by unblocking / accelerating progress on our freeport
- Adding capacity and capability to our partners

## Influencer

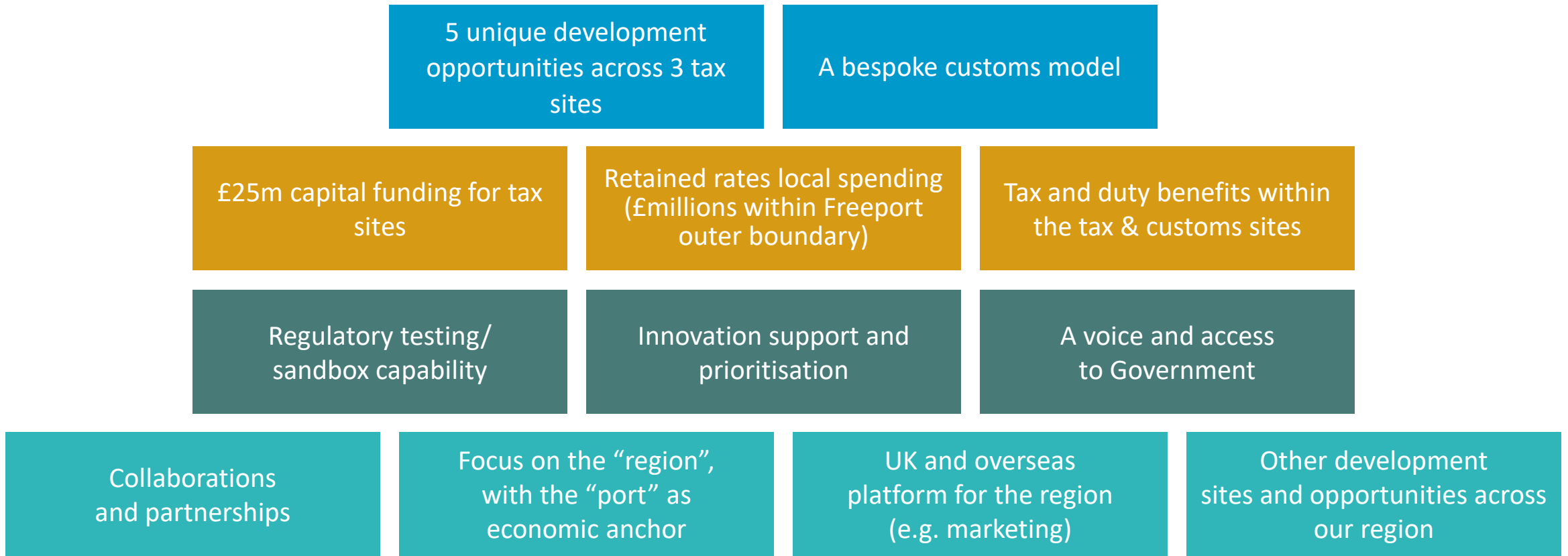
- Champion the East of England and Freeport East partnerships
- Listening and understanding across local, and national partners
- Support stronger regional voices at a national level
- Collaborate with like-minded partners to deliver initiatives across the region

## Elevate work with partners

- Understand and engage with priorities of our partner organisations
- Add our voice and support to key policy and investment opportunities
- Build effective and collaborative partnerships that deliver outcomes at a local level
- Focus on complementary relationships to avoid overlap / duplication

## 8.0 THE FREEPORT TOOLKIT

Each freeport has a toolkit that is based on core freeport mechanisms and funding streams, backed by wider opportunities and levers that all contribute to delivering a modern freeport in a mature, knowledge-based economy. Freeport East Ltd will take the lead in maximising the combined benefits of these mechanisms for the Freeport East economic area.



## 9.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

We are making good progress against our ambitions. Highlights of our achievements to date are as follows:

### Our Ambitions

3 new development sites designed to influence wider economic change

275 hectares of new business, innovation and employment space

13,500 Jobs created

Up to £300m of business rates over 25 years ploughed into the local economy

New centres and resources for innovation and skills delivery

Greater access for everyone to employment and education opportunities

### Progress to Date

One site nearly 50% complete with £250m of private sector investment to date. Other sites under development

Over 2.3 million sq ft of new high quality highly sustainable business and innovation and employment space created

Attracted nearly 2,000 direct job opportunities, as well as facilitating growth in indirect opportunities such as in construction and logistics supply chains

Nearly £20m of funding already allocated across skills, innovation and local business growth with further sizeable investment funds in the pipeline

Brand new £18m Skills and Innovation Centre being developed at Gateway 14 and new cluster emerging in Harwich with dedicated new innovation space.

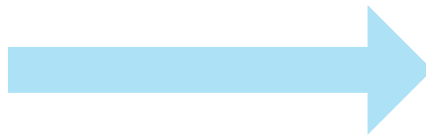
New job opportunities created on Freeport East tax sites for surrounding towns and villages, as well as employees in Ipswich, Clacton and Stowmarket. Skills programmes supporting others into work.

## 9.0 PROGRESS TO DATE (cont...)

### Our Ambitions

### Progress to Date

New economic opportunities for our whole region



Freeport East is working with a range of partners to drive new economic opportunities in green hydrogen, clean energy, transport decarbonisation, sustainable building and digital innovation, whilst also building on established strengths such as in ports and logistics.

£5.5 billion in economic growth



With over £250m of private investment, over £30m of enabling public sector investment and almost £20m of freeport funds allocated to date, Freeport East is already driving significant figures in investment which are expected to translate into sizeable economic benefits for the region.



# 10.0 OUR WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26

Based on a review of delivery against our work programme for 2024/25, we have identified the following priority work areas for 2025/26:

Priority 1 (P1)  
Develop Freeport East Ltd as a  
high performing organisation



Priority 3 (P3)  
Deliver investment



Priority 2 (P2)  
Deliver an ambitious vision  
for Freeport East



Priority 4 (P4)  
Make the most  
of our visibility and voice



The following slides go into each of these in more detail.

# 10.1 DEVELOP FREEPORT EAST LTD AS A HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION (P1)

## HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME

- Freeport East Ltd is recognised as a high-performing, well-respected and productive organisation that builds and capitalises on strong collaborative partnerships with a wide range of organisations. Freeport East is considered as a leader amongst UK freeports and deploys models of delivery that are used as templates by others.

## BACKGROUND

- Freeport East Ltd was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in December 2022. It has an effective Board of 11 Directors including an Independent Chair. It has an established relationship with East Suffolk Council as the Accountable Body. As the lead counterpart to Government and a platform for local partnerships, it is central to successful delivery of the Freeport East vision.

Key Priority 1	2025/2026 Business Plan Task	Business Plan Outcomes &/or Deliverables
Develop Freeport East Ltd as a high performing organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is effective at making and executing critical decisions</li> <li>Is adaptable in the face of change</li> <li>Has clearly defined roles and sufficient resources in place to execute and deliver its vision and objectives</li> </ul>	Develop and implement a flexible and efficient resources plan, maximising commitment of resources from partners and minimising costs to the freeport, ensuring appropriate resources and skills are in place to deliver the freeport's vision and objectives in line with government's freeport delivery plan.	Supportive Audit outcomes over the year following Annual Performance Review with Government and Financial Audit.  Judged internally and externally to be an effectively run organisation.  Efficient and flexible resources plan in place alongside commitment of resources from partners, to successfully deliver against the freeport's vision and objectives.
	Undertake a governance review to ensure efficient and effective governance structures and mechanisms are in place which enable the Supervisory Board and the Company to maximise its resources in the most efficient manner, including effective engagement processes with tax site owners and occupiers.	Governance structures and mechanisms reviewed in consultation with partners and in line with Government policy updates, with recommendations for any changes considered by the Supervisory Board.  Transparency of key information judged positively by Government and Member organisations.
	Develop a Social Value Charter and implement social value principles into the Company's procurement practices.	A Social Value Charter is developed and published and woven throughout the company's procurement procedures.
	Provide accountability through delivery of effective Monitoring and Evaluation and security monitoring arrangements across the freeport with efficient and accurate reporting to the Board and government.	Monitoring and evaluation processes are in place providing accountability to government and the Board on delivery against the freeport's objectives which includes monitoring of progress of seed capital projects.
	Produce a 5-year plan for the evolution of Freeport East Ltd as an organisation designed to be a place-based driver and enabler of inclusive economic growth, through alignment with evolving local governance mechanisms and opportunities.	High-level 5-year plan developed for Freeport East Ltd which takes account of the relevant local priorities of key stakeholders, as well as seeking explicit support and buy-in from them – particularly from our billing authorities.
	Build strong connections and collaborations with other Freeports in the United Kingdom to maximise collective benefits for the UK.	Freeport East has contributed to a healthy, collaborative and productive freeports network that represents local and regional interests to Government building on formal and informal pan-freeport networks.

# 10.2 DELIVER AN AMBITIOUS VISION (P2)

## HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME

- Deliver an ambitious yet coherent and focused vision and strategy for Freeport East that is widely communicated and understood, and builds momentum, interest and opportunities for our economic area, whilst complementing other programmes and initiatives already underway across the wider freeport area.

## BACKGROUND

- Our proposals to Government provide the basis for a more widely communicated vision and strategy. Our emergent work on a Green Hydrogen Hub have demonstrated the value of our platform and positioning to build productive and collaborative partnerships to deliver.

Key Priority 2	2025/26 Business Plan Task	Business Plan Outcomes &/or Deliverables
Establish and deliver on an ambitious vision for Freeport East and primary areas of focus	Deliver a Freeport East transport & connectivity masterplan and investment pipeline in partnership with Transport East and Local Authority planning and highways teams.	Published masterplan and investment pipeline for enhanced Freeport East connectivity.  Key transport interventions identified and clear advocacy and/or funding strategies in place.
	Build on our Green Transport Hub study with the REA to deliver new funding, investments and partnerships to deliver a greener and interconnected transportation system with Freeport East at its heart.	Study completed on grid requirements at Harwich and Felixstowe. Freeport East needs recognised by relevant energy sector planning stakeholders (i.e. NESO, Ofgem, DESNZ, UKPN) Green Freight Corridor action plan published and progress underway on key projects/deliverables.
	Continue to progress development of our vision for a Green Hydrogen Hub, using Freeport East as a platform to build partnerships and momentum, including through appropriate pilot projects and investments.	Ongoing progression of existing and new pilot activities; Pipeline of green hydrogen investments and supply/demand chain being progressed; Identification of new Freeport East inward investment demonstrably linked to green hydrogen hub.
	Continue to maximise value of key international partnerships to facilitate UK trade connections and increased trade and investment activity in the Freeport East area.	Six international partnerships identified and in progress based on relevant local strengths and opportunities.
	Continue to deliver and build effective partnerships around a Freeport East Innovation Cluster (locations, connections, opportunities, funding).	Freeport East support helps deliver at least three successful innovation funding bids; new innovation centres continuing to progress; new innovation funding support attracted into the Freeport East area.
	Support the development of a Harwich Innovation Cluster working closely with Tendring District Council and other partners.	2 Harwich clean energy and maritime cluster events held in the year; new local innovation centre established; develop plans for new commercial manufacturing and office spaces to support growth of Harwich clean energy and maritime opportunities.
	Support the development of a Skills & Innovation Centre working closely with Mid Suffolk District Council and other partners.	Enhanced MSDC-led Business Plan for the new G14 Skills & Innovation Centre led by new centre operator. Freeport East and other partners actively participation in the Skills & Innovation Centre governance.
	Work with Freeport East-based employers and education providers to deliver targeted and effective skills support programmes, maximising value of Skills & Innovation Fund	Establish strong partnerships with Freeport East employers to maximise opportunities for local communities and address skills gaps. Ensure that current funded projects compliment wider skills delivery

# 10.3 DELIVER INVESTMENT (P3)

## HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME

- Demonstrable progress on delivering of each of the three tax sites including infrastructure works and new inward investment
- A pipeline and delivery plan for wider investment priorities to deliver on Freeport East vision and how retained business rate model and other funding sources can be utilised to support their delivery

## BACKGROUND

- Following final approvals and agreements in place with MHCLG, we now have a mandate to progress seed capital delivery and strengthen marketing of all our site opportunities, through our own mechanisms and in partnership with the Department for Business & Trade.
- All seed capital has now been allocated and delivery is central to enabling further investments.

Key Priority 3	2025/26 Business Plan Task	Business Plan Outcomes &/or Deliverables
Investment Planning and Delivery	Deliver inward investment into Freeport East tax sites, customs sites and the wider economic area.	At least 3 new investments into Freeport East sites with Freeport East opportunities widely communicated in relevant sectoral and geographic markets.
	Delivery of seed capital funded projects across our tax sites.	Complete delivery of seed capital projects on each of Gateway 14, Felixstowe and Harwich tax sites.
	Build a public-private strategy for further development of the Bathside Bay Green Energy Hub.	Clarity on participation of key public and private partners in further financing and delivery of the Bathside Bay Green Energy Hub.
	As part of Freeport East wide infrastructure strategies, establish a prioritised pipeline of all future Freeport East investments, including on tax sites and in the wider geography to maximise the potential of the economic area.	Prioritised pipeline of investments focused on transport and grid infrastructure that will maximise the overall impact of Freeport East
	Maximising benefits derived through our Innovation and Skills and Clean Growth Funds.	Strong performance across all grant recipients with clarity on jobs, skills and other outcomes recorded. Lessons learned used to inform future grant programmes.
	In accordance with the Freeport East Retained Rates Strategy, develop, maintain and implement a pipeline of funding priorities.	Pipeline of priorities developed for funding through Pot C. 1 further Pot B tax site funding allocation agreed.
	Maximise opportunities through the Freeports delivery roadmap to create investable sites, attract investment and strengthen local supply chains, working with Government departments, councils, business and other key stakeholders.	An agreed approach to marketing collateral and attendance at events with DBT and regional partners, and a plan to operationalise. Proactive engagement with relevant partners, including Government departments to ensure Freeport East maximises the benefit of proposals in the Delivery Roadmap.

# 10.4 MAKE THE MOST OF OUR VISIBILITY & VOICE (P4)

## HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME

- Awareness of Freeport East has increased across a range of stakeholder groups that provide basis for investment and partnership opportunities and ensure strong local buy-in
- Freeport East speaks as a strong and respected voice, alongside and in support of key partners to make the case for investment in our area and to build high-value private and public sector partnerships

## BACKGROUND

- In 2024 we recruited specialist comms and marketing resources to strengthen our presence and output. We have attracted increased followers and engagement through our social media, pr and media activity whilst continuing to build on our partnership work and events by targeting key sectors and political influencers.

Key Priority 4	2025/26 Business Plan Task	Business Plan Outcomes &/or Deliverables
Make the most of our visibility and voice	Develop and deliver an ambitious communications and marketing plan for 2025/26, including Freeport East-hosted events and wider engagement activity targeted at building connections with a range of stakeholders including local communities.	Develop and deliver the Freeport East comms and marketing plan for 2025/26 Development of a range of marketing collateral to use at regional and international events.
	Build high-value partnerships with third party private sector organisations to deliver collaboration in areas relevant to delivering the Freeport East vision.	One or more new successful partnerships that promote specific trade and investment related opportunities. Other high-value partnerships enhanced/established that provide demonstrable benefits in areas such as inward investment, innovation, decarbonisation/green energy and opportunities for local people.
	Work alongside and in support of other partners to make the case for key investment priorities across transport, education, health, regeneration, skills, business investment and other areas of need to deliver the Freeport East vision.	Secure consistent and meaningful support from key local partners, both public and private sector, to aid on demonstrable recognition that Freeport East priorities are increasingly recognised regionally and nationally.
	Develop and publish our Annual Report.	Annual Report published and presented to stakeholders at our Annual General Meeting in September 2025.
	Cement regional and national partnerships, building on those partnerships already in place including APPG.	Take advantage of opportunities to promote the role and activities of the freeport.
	Engage young people around the opportunities that Freeport East offers, through our Skills Fund grants and participation of FE/HE partners.	Positive two-way engagement with young people around opportunities of Freeport East and positive feedback that Freeport East is enabling ways to support their future opportunities.

# 11.0 5 YEAR PLANNING

We will develop a **five-year plan** for Freeport East Limited which particularly focused on the opportunities arising from the following five areas:

- **Devolution** - Opportunities for Freeport East to play a key role in supporting new local Unitary Authorities and a local Mayoral Combined Authority
- **New Industrial Strategy** - Key role for Freeports as international gateways and supporting high priority sectors
- **Evolution of Freeport Government Policy** – aligning Freeport governance to new UK Government policy requirements
- **Attract additional sources of funding and investment to support Freeport East Objectives** - Exploring opportunities for Freeport East to attract additional sources of income/investment in addition to our business rates income, accelerating delivery against our vision and increasing economic growth faster.
- **Working with partners to bring forward other development sites capable of supporting economic growth** - Exploring opportunities for Freeport East to take an active role in bringing forward new sites for development and/or inward investments, potentially as a financial partner - enabling us to accelerate our delivery against our vision and increase economic growth faster.





# 12.0 FUNDING AND RESOURCES

## OVERVIEW

- Our operational costs are covered by retained business rates collected across our three tax sites.
- In addition, we endeavour to be creative and innovative in how we deliver our outcomes and balance scarce resources. This includes being highly collaborative and open to a range of partnerships across the public and private sectors.
- We aim to maximum use of the Government-funded Freeports Hub to provide specialist, high-value technical support, for example on economic analysis and business case modelling (recent examples include developing analysis around a proposed 'Green Freight Corridor' and providing technical support to refine and enhance our retained business rates model).
- We work closely with a range of partners, including local authorities and skills institutions, to target new funding streams that support our ambitions, for example on regeneration, innovation, decarbonisation and skills.
- Through being an innovative and engaging organisation, we endeavour to build positive partnerships with the private sector to pool resources and maximise our impact.
- We will look to bring in new resources and fresh thinking from local organisations, particularly our local Universities. We will specifically look to establish a means of giving opportunities for current students and alumni from the Universities of Suffolk and Essex to work with Freeport East through consulting projects, paid-internships and sandwich placements, maximising value for money in our delivery model whilst delivering enhanced education and skills benefits for our local partners.
- We will continue to explore other ways of enabling us to have an impact above and beyond the extent of our immediate human and financial resource envelope.



## 12.1 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2025/26

Expenditure	2025/26 Budget £	2025/26 Explanatory Notes
Wages and Salaries	770,000	Includes existing 9 FTE plus flexibility to increase resources to support delivery of key priorities
Staff Training	3,000	
Specialist Consultancy	50,000	
Legal and Professional Fees	95,000	Includes Comms Agency, Auditors fees and legal advice
Marketing and Local Engagement	93,000	Includes marketing and promotion, events and room hire, memberships and subscriptions
Other Expenses	77,400	Includes office costs including lease costs, printing and stationery, broadband, office refurbishment costs, company insurances and travel and subsistence
Recharges from East Suffolk Council	94,600	East Suffolk Council services for IT, HR and Finance.
Payroll Charges	17,000	Suffolk County Council charge for administration of payroll.
Contingency	50,000	Contingency for unforeseen costs, released through agreement with the s151 Officer/Finance Committee.
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>	

## 12.2 USE OF RETAINED BUSINESS RATES in 2025/26

- Our approach to use of retained business rates collected from the freeport tax sites is set out in the Freeport East Investment & Growth Strategy, available on our [website](#).
- Freeport East is able to collect any growth in business rate income on freeport tax sites, above a baseline figure, and utilise those funds to support local growth.
- The **current forecast of retained business rate income for 2025/26 is approximately £4m**. This is based on forecasts provided to us by the Billing Authorities. Currently, the forecast for 2025/26 is primarily driven by recent new occupations at the Gateway 14 freeport site.
- Up to £1.25m of this sum has been allocated to cover Freeport East Ltd operating costs in accordance with the proposed budget. The remaining funds will be utilised to provide:
  - Some funding back to relevant Local Authorities (referred to as Pot A and approximately £280,000 in 2025/26 to Mid Suffolk District Council).
  - Investment in freeport tax sites to enable them to drive growth and attract inward investment. In 2025/26, this primarily relates to funding provided to support the development of the Gateway 14 Skills & Innovation Centre (referred to as Pot B).
  - Wider investment in the local economy, for example local infrastructure, skills interventions and innovation support (referred to as Pot C and expected to be over £1m in 2025/26).
- The process for calculation and distribution of retained business rates is governed by an agreement between the relevant Billing Authorities and Freeport East Ltd. The forecasts set out above will be updated during the course of the year and reconciled at year-end to provide the final numbers.
- In addition, there will be a carry forward of retained rates and interest income from 2024/25, following accounting reconciliation, that is likely to provide additional sums into Pot C and therefore funds to support local growth investment. These sums will be summarised in our Annual Report.



## 13.0 MEASURING SUCCESS

- Delivery Progress against our Work Programme is regularly monitored by our Supervisory Board.
- Our first [annual report 2023/24](#) is available on our website and highlights our delivery priorities and achievements during our first year of delivery.
- Our second Annual Report will be presented at our Annual General Meeting in September 2025 and published thereafter, which will showcase our achievements against our 2024/25 business plan.
- We also utilise data collected as part of the Government-led Freeports Monitoring & Evaluation programme, as well as a range of other data and information to monitor our progress.
- Freeport East and the Accountable Body undergo an Annual Performance and Assurance Review with Government as part of their Monitoring and Evaluation of the Freeports Programme, with the findings published in the Government's Freeports Programme [Annual Report](#).

### KEY OUTPUTS

- Completion of our agreed work programme across the four priority areas, with regular reports on progress delivery to our Supervisory Board throughout the year.
- Submission of detailed data monitoring reports to Government on a six-monthly basis.
- Tangible progress and investment delivered across all three tax sites and through key initiatives on innovation, net zero, jobs and economic growth.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Continued and broad-based support, both locally and nationally, based on Freeport East delivering benefits across all policy objective areas.
- Increased recognition of the role and opportunities for partnership-working with Freeport East Ltd.
- The needs of the whole Freeport East economic area demonstrably becoming recognised at regional and national levels and incorporated into relevant planning, policy and investment priorities.



# 14.0 DEPENDENCIES

- Delivery of the Freeport East vision is based around partnership working and therefore there are many aspects of our business plan which have a reliance on dependencies from Members within our governance structure.
- In addition, for the general support and engagement from our Members and nominated Directors we rely on for delivering Freeport East, other specific dependences include:
  - **Government** – ensuring efficient reporting mechanisms, timely release of government funding and clear direction on government policy.
  - **Local Authorities** – coordination on planning matters; business rate relief process development and communication; Accountable Body role.
  - **Tax Site Owners** – leading on delivering infrastructure and vision for sites; sharing information required for marketing and financial forecasts.
  - **Tax Site Occupiers** – committing to working in partnership with Freeport East to deliver the freeport vision and objectives.
  - **Further and Higher Education Establishments** - Open, constructive collaborations, working together on key initiatives, such as skills and innovation partnerships.

