

**National Infrastructure Commission: Call for evidence****RESPONSE FROM ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Associated British Ports ("ABP") is the UK's largest ports operator with a network of 21 ports across Britain handling around 100 million tonnes of cargo every year. ABP's ports include four major ports on the Humber: Hull, Goole, Grimsby and Immingham. The Port of Immingham is the UK's largest port by tonnage. The Humber is the UK's busiest trading estuary with more than 30,000 vessel movements every year and, together, ABP's ports on the Humber handle around 60 million tonnes of cargo per year.

Ports on the Humber play a vital role in facilitating the movement of a wide range of goods and commodities to and from the UK. The ports' principal trades include liquid and dry bulks, containers, automotive, paper and timber. The Port of Hull also welcomes over 800,000 passengers every year travelling on ferry services to Belgium and the Netherlands. A study undertaken by Arup has shown that ABP's ports on the Humber contribute £2.2 billion to the UK economy each year and support 33,000 jobs. These totals include £1.56 billion injected into the regional economy and 23,000 jobs supported on both banks of the estuary.

Ensuring that businesses and exporters located in the North have efficient access to European and global markets is a fundamental part of promoting economic growth and helping re-balance the economy. Addressing weaknesses in potential and future road and rail connectivity is therefore vital. In this respect, ensuring the long term upgrade of the A63 linking the Port of



Hull is particularly important, as well as ensuring adequate rail capacity connecting both the Port of Hull and Port of Immingham. In respect of the latter, it is important to note that these ports have a critical role in protecting national energy security by facilitating the supply of biomass by rail to Drax power station which generates around 7% of the UK's electricity.

ABP is part way through a 5-year investment programme which, on the Humber, totals more than £400 million in new port infrastructure and facilities. This investment has been privately funded and is based on customer demand. The main possible constraint on helping ports realise their full potential is making sure that landside infrastructure – i.e. road and rail – continues to be fit-for-purpose in line with increasing trade flows. This is where public investment becomes critical and ensuring that this can continue over the longer term is therefore vital. In this respect it is important to be cognisant of the risk of reducing private investment in essential port and marine infrastructure should any additional requirements be placed on port operators and/or port customers for the funding of landside infrastructure. It is also worth noting that in order to secure the maximum benefit from public investment in road and rail links to ports in terms of increased trade and economic growth, it is important that this investment is aligned with customer demand.

Over the next 20 to 30 years ABP anticipates a substantial rise in the volume of cargo handled through its Humber ports and public investment in landside infrastructure will need to follow. Strong growth is expected in a number of areas including Ro-Ro, vehicles and automotive, as well as other bulk commodities. We would be pleased to supply more detail on our forecasts on request. We would also be pleased to meet to discuss the information included in our response or answer any further questions if helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. M. Leighton', followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

David Leighton