



**THE CASE FOR  
A FREEPORT IN**

# **DONCASTER**



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“I am proud of the UK that explores the new frontiers of the 21st century global economy, pushing for that same liberalisation in trade in services, helping to turn around recent protectionist trends and to help deliver the benefits of the global digital revolution for all members, large or small.” ~ Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade.

# FOREWORD

I could not be prouder of where I am from – Doncaster. It has been my home for all of my 48 years. My passion for my local area is why I took the time to produce this briefing, which is a supplement to the response to the Freeport Consultation that has been produced by Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) and Sheffield City Region (SCR). As the newly elected Member of Parliament for Don Valley, I thought it was my duty to help with the bid and to highlight the potential of the airport which lies in my constituency.

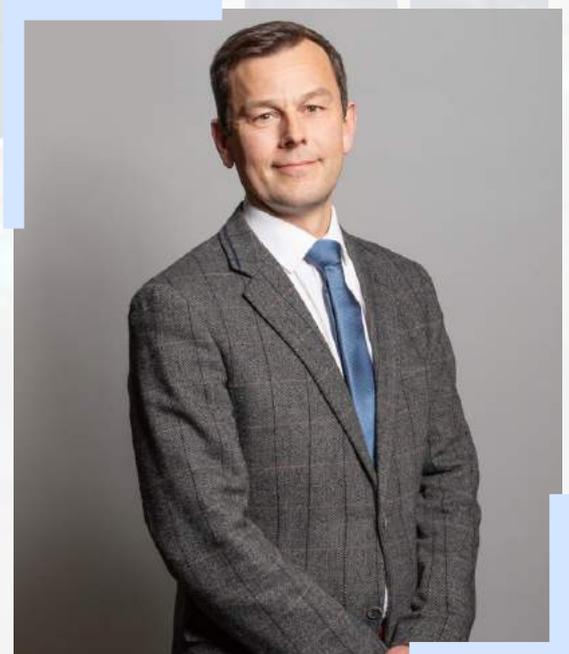
After all, as a businessman, I know the transformation of Doncaster Sheffield Airport into a Freeport is not only right for Doncaster but right for the country. Doncaster and the surrounding area is a truly wonderful place to live and work, with its many open spaces, quaint towns and villages. Doncaster is also an historic town which played a key role in the history of British industry and commerce. One of Doncaster's main attributes is its location, being a mere 50 miles from the east coast, 60 miles from Manchester, 30 minutes from the Derbyshire Dales and 90 minutes from London. After all, if you're in Doncaster, you are never far from anywhere.

There are multiple reasons as to why Doncaster Sheffield Airport can play a crucial part in the future of the UK's international trade relations. Its proximity to the iPort, a mega warehouse, and to the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Sheffield demonstrates the area's potential.

Yet by far the greatest asset of Doncaster is its people. The newly found optimism that has taken root in this borough, coupled with the area's hard work ethic, would ensure that the transformation of DSA into a Freeport would be a resounding success. Combined with the Government's levelling up agenda and its vision for a Global Britain, a Freeport would unleash a new wave entrepreneurship and opportunity for Doncaster and its people.

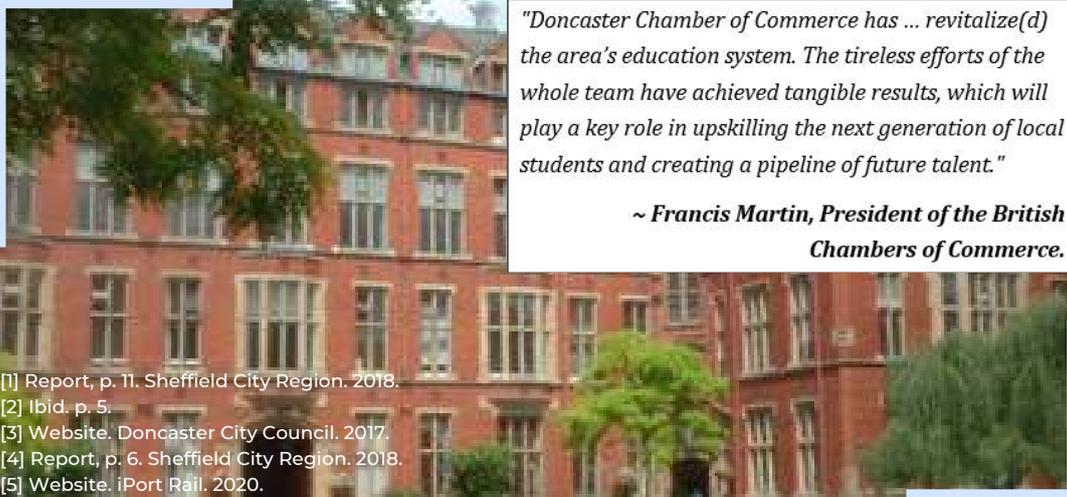
The following pages continue to set out why Doncaster is the right place for the Freeport. I hope you enjoy the read and let Doncaster people enjoy a bright future.

Would I choose Doncaster? You bet I would.



Nick Fletcher, MP for Don Valley

# THE CASE FOR DONCASTER



*"Doncaster Chamber of Commerce has ... revitalized the area's education system. The tireless efforts of the whole team have achieved tangible results, which will play a key role in upskilling the next generation of local students and creating a pipeline of future talent."*

*~ Francis Martin, President of the British Chambers of Commerce.*

[1] Report, p. 11. Sheffield City Region. 2018.

[2] Ibid. p. 5.

[3] Website. Doncaster City Council. 2017.

[4] Report, p. 6. Sheffield City Region. 2018.

[5] Website. iPort Rail. 2020.

One of many reasons Doncaster is an attractive place to start or grow a business is its skilled workforce. The town has a long industrial history, and its workers today carry on that tradition. With two large universities close by, the area is not short on skilled graduates; hundreds of engineering and technology students from Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield enter the workforce each year. The University of Sheffield is particularly notable too for its partnership with local businesses and its role in creating the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, which employs about 500 researchers and engineers to study manufacturing and materials for industrial use [1]. The local workforce also benefits several colleges offering apprenticeships and skills-based training.

Doncaster also has its own Chamber of Commerce, which enables businesses to support and network with one another. This makes the town a hive of innovation and entrepreneurship. In recognition for the Chamber's excellent work in promoting business, it won the most effective campaigning award at the annual Chamber Business Awards 2018. Doncaster Chamber also won the best Chamber of the Year in December 2019. The judges from the British Chambers of Commerce praised Doncaster Chamber for punching well above its weight.

Companies considering a move to the area can be sure of support from local government. Investors in the Sheffield City Region could take advantage of SCR's Enterprise Zones, which offer simplified planning processes in addition to business rate and tax relief [2]. Business Doncaster also provides a range of services to companies at all stages of growth, including training workshops, business planning support, and advice on marketing and publicity[3]. They would be in good company, as businesses such as Rolls-Royce, Boeing, and McLaren Automotive already have operations in the region [4].

Doncaster's logistical advantage is another reason for businesses to choose to make the city their home. Situated in the middle of the country, Doncaster is only two hours away from east coast deep waters ports an hour and a half to London and four hours to Glasgow by rail [5]. Completed in 2018, The Great Yorkshire Way ensures that journey times from DSA to the M18, M1, and M18 are now significantly shorter. Additionally, DSA is 10 minutes away from Doncaster's train station, and there is a proposal to eventually build a new rail station at the airport. Doncaster Sheffield Airport estimates this will make the airport more easily accessible to over six million people.

# LOCATION OF DSA

*"A Freeport would accelerate investment and development of this 1600 acre employment district, unlocking the potential to create thousands of jobs for the people of South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire."*  
*Robert Hough, Chairman Doncaster Sheffield Airport*



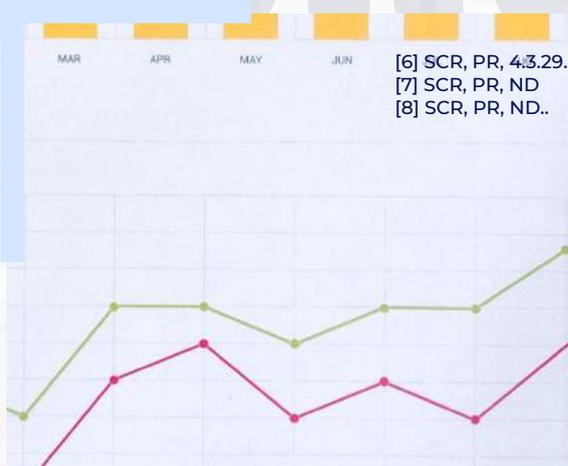
Designating Doncaster Sheffield Airport as a Freeport would be an excellent way for our Government to demonstrate its commitment to levelling up the North. The creation of a Freeport would be fundamentally different to other regeneration programmes, as it is not a one-off grant or time limited scheme, but rather a long term investment that would allow Doncaster to create its own income for many years to come. This will ultimately lead to better jobs, more housing, and improved life chances for a generation.

The airport itself is conveniently located next to the town of Doncaster. As a result of the airport, excellent rail links and major motorways, it is connected to both roads, sea and air. Consequently it is already a transport and logistical hub in South Yorkshire and has the necessary infrastructure to ensure that a Freeport located close by would be commercially viable.

# BUSINESSES TO BENEFIT FROM A FREEPORT

The Sheffield City Region (SCR) is at the forefront of innovation in manufacturing through the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, which exports ideas and products across the world [6]. Many of these companies are located close to Doncaster Sheffield Airport and specialise in logistics, pharmaceuticals and the energy sector. Furthermore, such firms already export their goods globally, and are eager to utilise the airport to increase their global trading reach. Companies which provide specialised engineering and manufacturing parts are already known to utilise Freeports currently and are critical to global supply chains.

Although some SCR businesses export their goods and services globally, there is potential to do more. This was recognized by the Department for International Trade's 'Export for Growth' programme, which provides support for companies within SCR who want to develop their businesses internationally [7]. Undoubtedly, companies within SCR and those close to Doncaster Sheffield Airport which specialise in certain high-demand industries but are non-exporters would be encouraged to utilise a Freeport to expand their consumer base. The SCR has already begun work to encourage businesses in the region to look further afield to emerging markets as a method to grow their businesses.



[6] SCR, PR, 4.3.29.  
[7] SCR, PR, ND  
[8] SCR, PR, ND..

For example, on 25 February 2020, SCR announced that it would provide 10 small and medium-sized companies support to develop business links with India. Businesses and local government interest in raising the international trading profile of SCR is already apparent, yet the transformation of DSA into a Freeport would undoubtedly boost the export profile of the area and allow the region to reach its economic potential [8].

*"Freeport status would assist Doncaster and the wider region in our endeavours to encourage more firms to internationalise and export in response to the opportunities afforded by Brexit"*

*~ Dan Fell, Chief Executive Officer of Doncaster Chamber.*

There are a number of companies in particular which are likely to benefit from the DSA being transformed into a Freeport. Just two examples can be found in G L Filtration Ltd, which is a world-leader in the design and manufacture of filtration and drying equipment for the pharmaceutical and related industries. Secondly, Richards Apex Europe Limited has seen the machining industry mature into a very sophisticated and demanding field.

The SCR and DSA therefore have enormous potential, with well established export businesses already operating close to Doncaster Sheffield Airport. It is clear that the region also contains businesses which do not export globally but have the ability to become commercial partners with firms abroad – particularly those in emerging markets. The Government recognises this, and by supporting and promoting a Freeport in DSA it would allow the region to be a key player in the export of British goods.

# INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A FREEPORT

The location of a Freeport and the infrastructure surrounding it is crucial for any port's success. In order to increase business activity in a Freeport, it is essential that a Freeport has access to adequate supply chains and a mixture of infrastructure which can both transport goods and allow a workforce to move to and from the Port. In the United Kingdom, the vast majority of road freight lifted and moved is carried in heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), yet rail freight can be cost-effective alternative and can also provide economic and flexible transport chains for higher-value goods [9].

Other benefits of rail freight include the ability to transport goods in one move in a timely manner, the fact that doing so is greener and because goods transported in such a way are more secure [10]. Along with roads for HGVs and railway lines to carry rail freight, it is also necessary to have suitable storage facilities which are integrated with surrounding transport infrastructure. The most obvious example of the advantages of having warehouse space can be found in Luxembourg. Le Freeport is a 22,000 square-metre building that opened in 2014. It is one of the latest Freeports to join a global network of 'one stop shop' warehouses [11].

Equally, along with storage facilities, it is necessary for any Freeport to have Research and Development facilities, and be in areas which have particular specialisms and sectoral strengths which provide a port with a comparative advantage internationally. Sheffield City Region already specialises in advanced manufacturing, healthcare technologies, digital and computing, low carbon technologies and logistics [12]. With regards to Doncaster Sheffield Airport, over 6.2 million people are within a 60-minute drive away from the airport. Equally, the airport is close to the iPort, a mega-warehouse complex which could easily complement the logistical needs of a Freeport and just over 20 minutes from the world-renowned Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre.

Furthermore, it should also be highlighted that Doncaster is connected to the ports of Immingham and Grimsby via the South Humberside Main Line. The Line is one of eight 'Seven Day Railway Routes' and transports approximately 20% of UK rail freight with there being the opportunity for this capacity to be increased [13]. Doncaster Sheffield Airport is therefore situated next to a) major roads and infrastructure, b) a large workforce pool and c) the huge iPort warehouse facility. Doncaster Sheffield Airport would also be a suitable location for a Freeport because of the direct rail freight link between Doncaster and the ports of Immingham and Grimsby.



*A Freeport would undoubtedly attract significant investment into Doncaster.*  
**Paul Bathgate, Hive Logic, iPort**

[9] CoS, briefing, Feb 2016.  
[10] Ibid.  
[11] F&S, report, 19 Dec 2016.  
[12] Transport for the North, report, 24 June 2016.  
[13] Network Rail, PR, 17.05.13.

Doncaster iPort

# SKILLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*"In choosing Doncaster, the Government will support the hotbed of manufacturing in our region and create a global hub for trade. It will support our regeneration plans, see the creation of top quality, high value new jobs and play an important role in stimulating more innovation in our area."*

*- Damian Allen, Chief Executive of Doncaster Council*



[14] Website, Sheffield City Region, ND.

[15] Draft document, p. 58, Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan, 23.03.2020

[16] Ibid.

[17] Website, Department for Education, 2020.

[18] Report, p. 1, Sheffield City Region, 22 October, 2019.

[19] Website, Skills Bank, ND.

The skills market in the Sheffield City Region is ripe for development. There are already around 14,000 new apprentices every year [14] in the SCR and two universities. Alongside this, approximately £25 million has been spent on Research and Development [15], with much of that being funded by the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. While the R&D investment in the region is welcome, it can be higher, which in turn could improve skills, education, and employment.

By working with local colleges, the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University, the Sheffield City Region Skills & Employment Board could match up the employment and needs of the Freeport operators and Freeport businesses with available local education. The SCR is also in the process of establishing a Skills and Employment Specialist Advisory Network to develop the SCR skills base, education performance and labour mobility. The Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership is running a scheme until March 2021 called Skills Bank [19]. This programme helps businesses invest in their workforce by matching private sector investment in skills training with public funding.

Business that can make a case for how the skills investment will deliver growth are eligible for the funding, which would not be difficult for most Freeport businesses. Additionally, Freeport businesses would be supported by the Sheffield City Region Growth Hub, which helps businesses access training, import and export expertise, and business development

# FREEPORT: EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATION



*"Freeports are a simple and stellar way to boost an area, catapulting local commerce into a global trading hub, while offering big opportunities for jobs and investment."*

*~ James Roberts, Political Director  
of the Tax Payers Alliance.*

- [20] Website. The Sheffield College. 2019.
- [21] Website. CollabGroup. ND.
- [22] Report. CollabGroup. 13 November 2019.
- [23] Website. Department for the Economy. 17 October 2018.
- [24] Ibid.

## *Doncaster College*

Over 2,000 employers already work with entities like Sheffield College [20], a member of CollabGroup. This is a group of colleges that 'form partnerships with employers to deliver high-quality skills training' in sectors ranging from manufacturing to entertainment [21].

In their report on college-employer partnerships they emphasise their role as skills advisors in addition to supplying labour [22]. New Freeport businesses would no doubt benefit from working with local colleges, and we know it would be possible to forge similar links between Freeport employers and local colleges in the Doncaster-Sheffield region. The Government could therefore consider creating a scheme alongside the Freeport that connects Freeport businesses with FE colleges to establish a direct link, giving employers preferential access to local talent and knowledge, and workers to high quality jobs.

A few years ago, Northern Ireland's Department for the Economy launched a similar scheme on a larger scale with their Let's Do Business initiative [23]. This scheme offers local companies the ability to engage their local FE college to help recruit talented people, reskill and upskill their existing staff or to access expertise in innovation and research [24], benefitting workers who are already employed by local companies as well as young people entering the workforce.

According to NI's Department for the Economy, in three years the six participating FE colleges upskilled more than 7,000 employees while supporting around 3,700 local businesses [25]. While this scheme would need to be modified for Doncaster and Freeport employers, it could serve as a model and employers that have not previously worked with local education providers could demonstrate their interest in to doing so by committing to participate in this sort of initiative.

# DSA AND DONCASTER HOUSING

An article in the Guardian in April 2016 looked at the Shannon Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Ireland. This was created in 1959 and is widely considered to be the first modern special economic zone or freeport. The article points out that the population of Shannon did not expand rapidly as has been the case in some other SEZs [26].

That said, the Sheffield City Region has long taken the housing needs of its local population seriously; in three years it managed to double its annual housing growth from around 3,000 to more than 6,000 new homes [27]. Doncaster Sheffield Airport is fully committed to helping the SCR expand its available housing. In its 2018-2037 masterplan, DSA carefully considers how future housing needs will increase along with its own development and sets out its proposed plan to meet them. Doncaster Sheffield Airport expects that over a 30 year period, it will add nearly 8,000 new jobs to the local economy and build thousands of new homes on the site [28]. Doncaster Sheffield Airport's ambition is to become much more than a typical airport, creating a sense of community with its residential and retail area on the wider site fully integrated into the airport [29].

High quality housing stock is essential to these plans, and proposed public transport and community facilities would make the site an attractive option for potential investors too. The key feature of this masterplan is a target of 2,000 to 3,000 new houses in total, which would significantly help the Sheffield City Region reach its goal of building 70,000 new homes in the next decade [30]. To meet the likely range of demand, it would include both affordable and executive homes. Additionally, the masterplan would set aside an area of land aside for a primary school in the residential area if deemed necessary. The 175 acres of land that DSA is proposing to use for housing would not be suitable for aviation uses. Importantly, the residential area would not be located near the runway, nor would it be under the planes' approach or departure pathways. This space is ideal for residential development as it is not located on the greenbelt or in a flood risk zone, thus there are few technical constraints on homebuilding.



[25] Ibid.

[26] Guardian, article, 19 April 2016.

[27] Website, SCR Housing Fund, 17 January 2018.

[28] Report draft, P. 14. DoncasterSheffield Airport, Mar 2018.

[29] Ibid., P. 72.

[30] Ibid.

# INNOVATION AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

In an early debate on Freeports [31] in 2018, it was suggested that innovation hubs could be established alongside Freeports 'linking universities and colleges in whichever area the Freeport might sit.' New Doncaster College is less than two miles away from the proposed Freeport site of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, so would be an ideal place for young people to learn new technologies and apply them to Freeport businesses. The Sheffield City Region is home to two exceptional universities, the University of Sheffield and Sheffield-Hallam University, which along with local authorities are creating the Advanced Manufacturing and Innovation District (AMID) [32]. This project intends to connect the current Advanced Manufacturing Park with the Sheffield Business Park, 'creating a central hub to the Innovation district.' Advanced Manufacturing and Innovative District also has an incubator facility [33], where 150 small and medium-sized businesses can take advantage of their proximity to the research and collaboration between manufacturing and engineering companies. It is located less than half an hour from Doncaster Sheffield Airport, and will be connected via public transport to Sheffield City Centre.

A Freeport at Doncaster Sheffield Airport will take full advantage of all the technological innovation AMID has to offer. As part of its Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan [34], Doncaster Council aims to build Research and Development facilities too. The Sheffield City Region is likewise eager to support innovation in local businesses; its Growth Hub works with businesses 'to identify the right support to review current market trends, analyse disruptive technologies, develop and review current business models and build on core competencies [35]. Innovate UK [36] is another source of development funding, giving government-back grants to businesses to research new products and processes. Doncaster is also a driving force in promoting rail freight research and training. The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure (NCATI) opened in September 2017 to ensure that the UK could transform its rail and transport infrastructure. One of its state of the art campuses is located in Lakeside, Doncaster.

The purpose of the College is to provide young people with the skills required to create HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other rail projects [37]. This ensures that a Freeport located in Doncaster Sheffield Airport would have a skilled logistical workforce right on its doorstep. Furthermore, NCATI's other purpose is to support employers with future railway digitalisation projects and ways in which companies can better utilise the skills and abilities of an any workforce [38]. Equally, in September 2020 [39], Doncaster is expected to open its own University Technical College (UTC). The UTC will specialise in engineering, as well as digital and creative technologies with the capacity to train 700 students [40]. Working with Sheffield Hallam University, Doncaster UTC will produce the next generation of highly skilled engineers and designers, the exact kind of workforce which would be so critical to the maintenance and running of a Freeport.

The University Technical College will provide students with the opportunity to specialise in evolving technologies and will therefore address any concerns businesses may have about access to a skilled workforce in Doncaster. Instead it will go further by ensuring that Doncaster has the institutional facilities to be a national leader in vocational skills training. Students who study at the UTC are expected to then progress in the rail, construction, infrastructure and advanced manufacturing sectors, all of which will interact directly or indirectly with the operation of a Freeport [41].



**"...jobs and investment in the area [would] turbo charge the local economy and benefit us all."**

**-Alexander Stafford, MP for Rother Valley**

[31] Hansard, Westminster Hall Debate, 11 October, 2018.

[32] Website, 2020.

[33] Website, Brookings Institution, 25 March 2015.

[34] Report, p. 4, Doncaster City Council, 19.5.19.

[35] Website, SCR Growth Hub, 2020.

[36] Website, HM Government Innovate UK, ND.

[37] NCATI, website, ND.

[38] Ibid.

[39] DFP, article, 17.09.20.

[40] DoncasterUTC, website, ND.

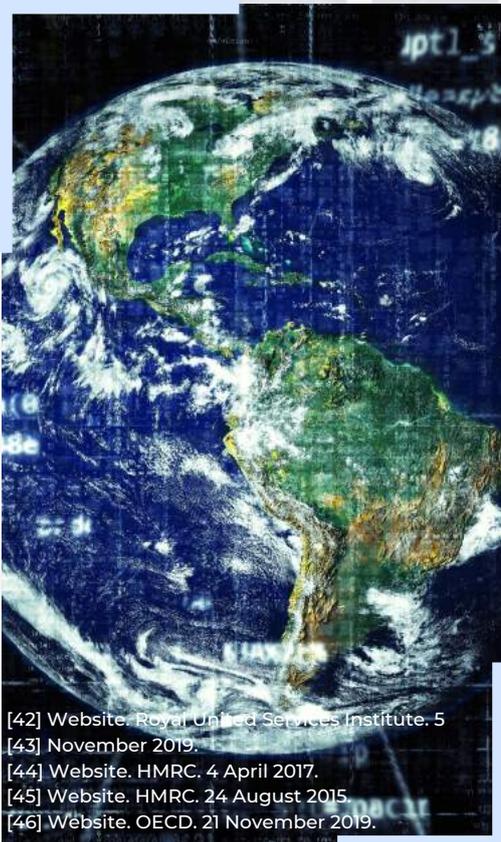
[41] Ibid.

# RISK OF ILLICIT ACTIVITY



Risk of illicit activity will be no higher in Freeports than the rest of the economy, and it would be managed through the normal risk-based profiling and intelligence-led approach that happens through other ports of entry. If anything, the focused geographic area, digital logistics regime needed and light-touch approval of businesses will likely make Freeports a lower risk operating environment than other parts of the economy.

An analysis by researchers at the Royal United Services Institute identified two main reasons that criminals are able to exploit free trade zones (FTZ): insufficient governance and insufficient information sharing [42]. Poor governance is not a problem locally or nationally, and since the UK has such an effective customs regime already it is unlikely that either of these would be an issue. In addition, HMRC has a Fraud Hotline for use (also available as an online form) that a person can call if any type of tax fraud is suspected, including failure to pay UK duty [43].



Companies importing goods into the UK already have to make an electronic declaration (ENS) of goods in advance of their arrival [44]. The Import Control System (ICS) integrates ENS processing and the Movement Reference Number. Although the ICS is an EU system, it would likely be possible for the UK to design a similar system that performs the same functions. Finally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) Council issued a set of guidelines last year for members to follow to enhance Free Trade Zone transparency without deterring trade [45].

The World Customs Organization's SAFE Framework [46] also sets out global recommendations to make customs controls more effective. While these are voluntary initiatives, they have the potential to keep illicit activity in UK Freeports very low.

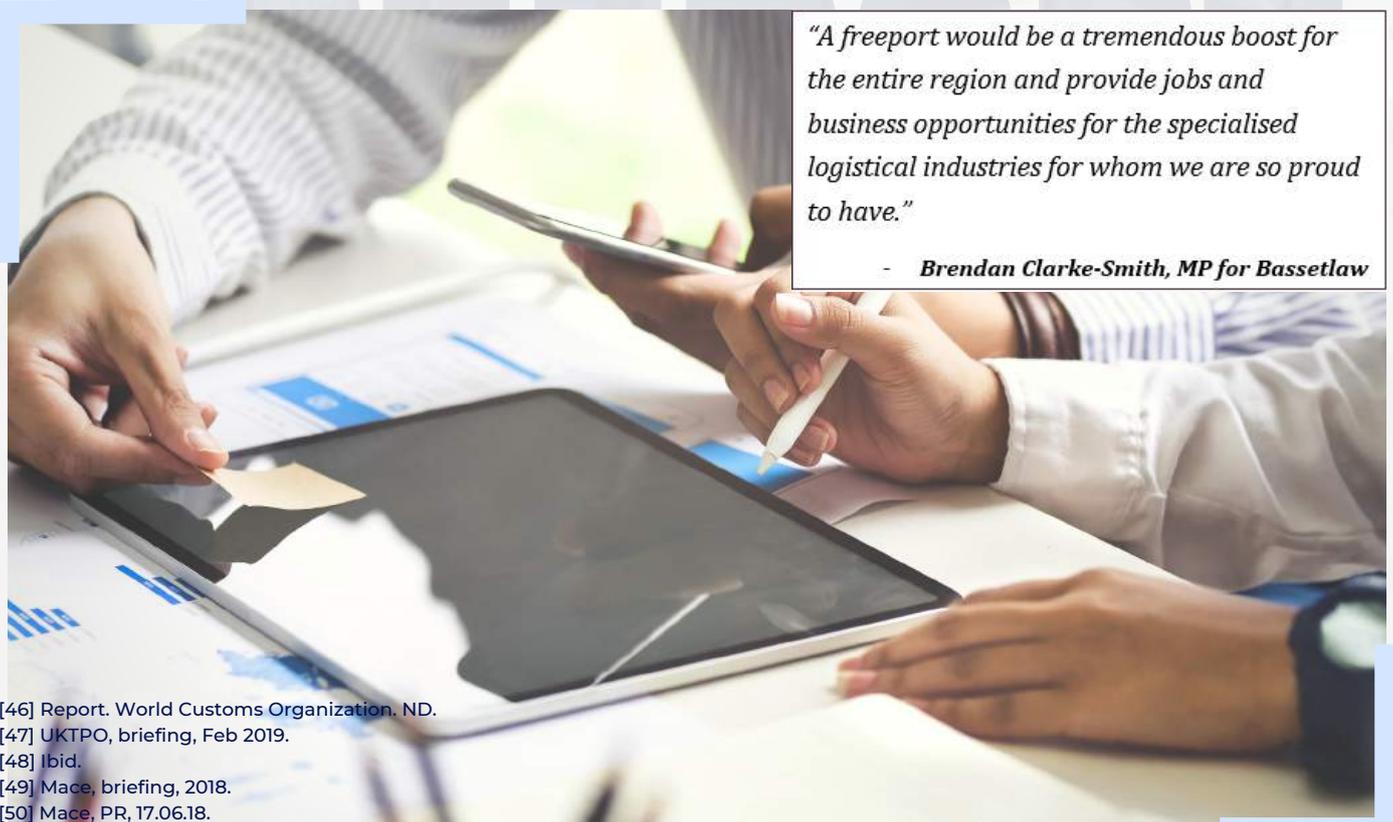
[42] Website. Royal United Services Institute. 5 November 2019.  
[43] Website. HMRC. 4 April 2017.  
[44] Website. HMRC. 24 August 2015.  
[45] Website. OECD. 21 November 2019.

# BENEFITS OF FREEPORTS FOR BUSINESSES

According to UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO), there are no precise estimates of the market value of the potential costs and benefits from free zones globally. That said, their analysis concluded that most of the financial benefits of freeports come from i) duty reduction on inverted tariffs; ii) cash-flow savings from zone efficiencies affecting inventory control; iii) duty exemption on exports and iv) duty deferral [47].

Consequently, businesses will benefit in the four ways that are outlined. According to UKTPO, companies which are engaged in the importation of high-value goods could benefit the most from savings made by duty deferral [48]. According to a Mace report, local Freeports can become 'supercharged' if it becomes integrated within enterprise zones. It has already been outlined within this report the educational institutions which are already operating and engaging in world-leading research and development in the Sheffield City Region. It should, therefore, be expected that a Freeport would closer integrate businesses with research institutions, in turn giving businesses the opportunity to have continual access to high skilled labour for the future [49].

The creation of Freeports would attract businesses previously deterred by EU tariffs regulations to export to the United Kingdom. This greater openness and interconnectedness with British trading partners would support increased innovation in industries as they became more exposed to ideas from abroad and would also have to compete with imports which may have not previously been circulated within the British economy. Freeports will lead to an increase in international trade; the productivity of businesses surrounding Freeports will thus increase. As they increase international trade, they subsequently speed up the diffusion of new ideas, techniques and the adoption of new technologies across international borders. It is estimated that the creation of freeports in the North of England shows that it would create 150,000 jobs and would put £1,500 a year in the pockets of every Northern family [50]. This would significantly rebalance the UK economy and therefore allow businesses within the Sheffield City Region not involved in Freeports see increased demands for their products.



*"A freeport would be a tremendous boost for the entire region and provide jobs and business opportunities for the specialised logistical industries for whom we are so proud to have."*

- **Brendan Clarke-Smith, MP for Bassetlaw**

[46] Report. World Customs Organization. ND.

[47] UKTPO, briefing, Feb 2019.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Mace, briefing, 2018.

[50] Mace, PR, 17.06.18.

# WHY AN INLAND FREEPORT?

In the United States, inland ports have proven to have access to a more diversified and wider labour pool, and are more easily expanded due to them being less geographically constrained than sea ports [51]. They are also more likely to have the space for warehousing and distribution facilities and major entry and exit points are less congested [52]. When considering the factors that would support different port modes becoming Freeports, it is important to keep in mind the infrastructure that inland locations such as airports and business parks may already have. Doncaster is exceptionally well connected; freight trains are around two hours away from the deep water ports of Immingham and Teesport [53]. Since it is located in the middle of the country, transporting goods from iPort Rail can be in London or Glasgow within seven hours [54].

The area is equally well connected by road, and lorries transporting goods from iPort can reach over 90% of the UK population within four hours [55]. Additionally, as two thirds of Enterprise Zones are located inland [56], non-coastal Freeports are more likely to be near one, thus an inland Freeport could more easily take advantage of the benefits they offer. This is the case in the Sheffield City Region, where SCR's Enterprise Zones allow investors benefits from 'business rate and tax relief alongside simplified planning processes, key account management and bespoke financial support' [57] Freeport businesses in the SCR could also benefit from the local Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District, where companies including Rolls-Royce, McLaren, and Boeing have already invested. [58]



*"Doncaster Sheffield Airport has a vital role to play in the work to deliver on our region's economic growth ambitions.*

*DSA becoming a freeport will also help unlock the wider potential of the North and, as we emerge from the pandemic, better connect us both nationally and internationally.*

*- Dan Jarvis, Mayor of the Sheffield City Region.*

[51] Inbound Logistics, article, 31.01.20

[52] JLL, report, Spring 2011.

[53] Website. iPort Rail. 2020.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Website. Enterprise Zones (HM Government). 2020.

[57] Report, p. 5. Sheffield City Region, 2018

[58] Ibid, p. 6.

[59] Report, p. 3. Centre Economics and Business Research. Sep 2016.

It is also important to consider the differences between inland and coastal local economies and what each can offer. While seaports clearly play an important role in international trade, in 2015, over half of goods going to non-EU countries were transported via air [59].

As the Government seeks to increase trade with non-EU countries after Brexit, airports are set to become increasingly central to the UK's international trade. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and a dramatic reduction in air travel, modifying airports for goods transport would also ensure they remain viable and support the local economy while passenger numbers remain low.

# CONCLUSION

I hope you have found this brief helpful and that it has cemented your decision that Doncaster is a suitable location for a Freeport. As you know, Doncaster is my home, and I care passionately about its future. In particular, I care about the future of its young people, many of whom would hopefully work in this Freeport. During my time as an MP, I have spoken to children in my constituency on numerous occasions. Time and time again, they say that the opportunities in Doncaster can be limited. While I tell them that in life, we make our own opportunities to try to fill them with optimism, I know that they are right.



[60] Nick Fletcher MP, <https://www.role-model.co.uk/>, ND.

When I walk the many towns and villages which make up Don Valley, I see many younger people who are no doubt incredibly talented, but whose opportunities in life are stunted due to economic and societal forces which are out of their control. I am a firm believer that many such young people lack aspirational figures in their lives who give them the confidence to reach their full potential. This is why, as part of my work as the MP for Don Valley, I have just begun my own programme, which promotes the importance of role models in our community.

While I do not doubt that such a community project will turn around the lives of many children and families for the better, such change can only be long-lasting if it is matched with economic and infrastructure investment in my constituency. In my maiden speech, I spoke about 10-year-old “Tommy”, whose life prospects were poor due to having a lack of role models and economic opportunities in his life. The creation of a Freeport would undoubtedly provide Tommy, and the many children like him in my constituency, with the ability to do well in life and make something of themselves. In other words, the Freeport would be transformative for Doncaster and the Sheffield City Region as a whole. It would end the decades of pessimism and replace them with a new sense of purpose. It would connect the region not only to the economic prosperity of the South East but to the rest of the world. It would be a shining example of how a genuinely Global Britain could change the lives of many in areas which have long felt forgotten.

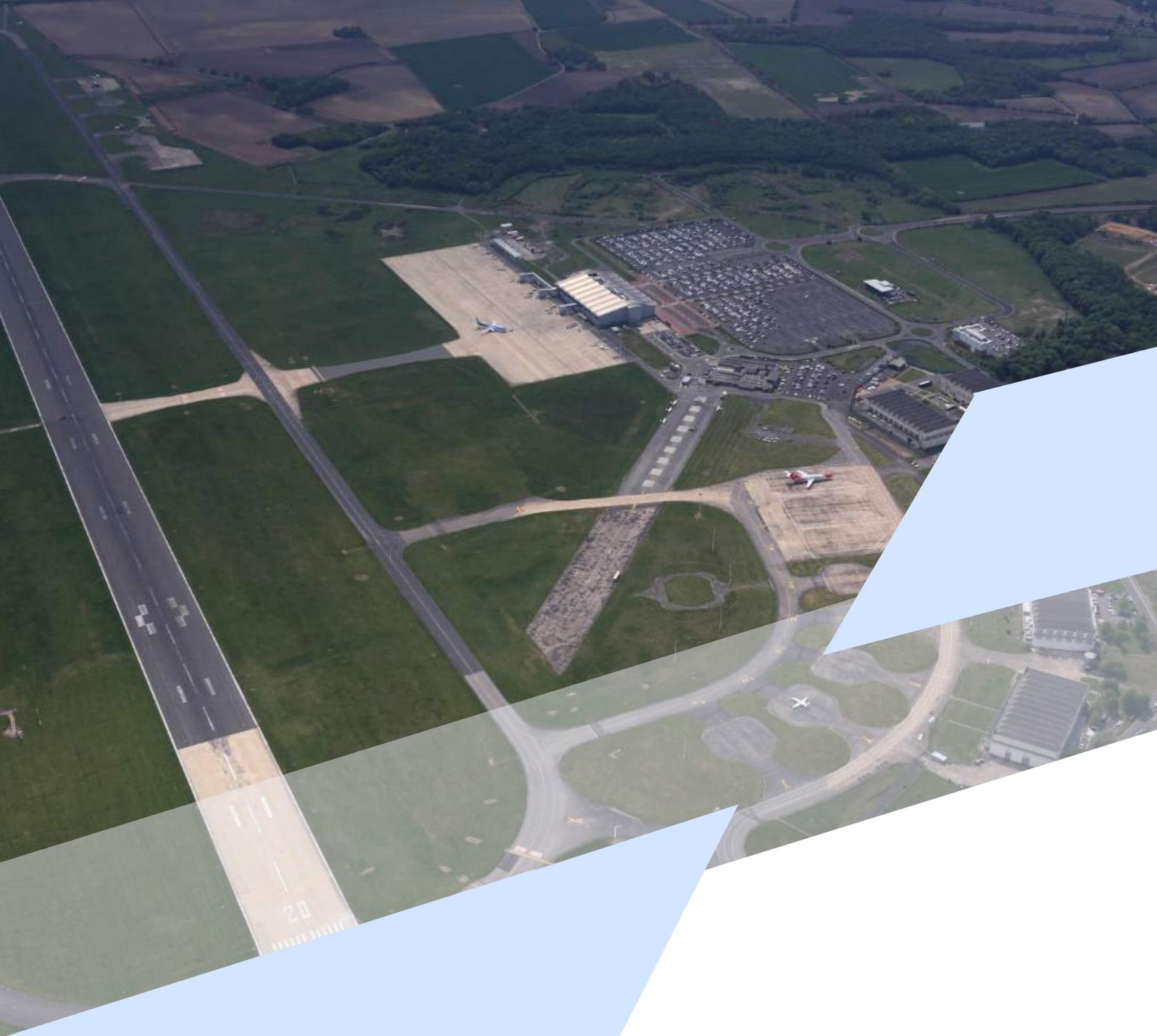
All submissions will talk of jobs, housing and infrastructure. Yet you must also ask yourself what a Freeport is really for. For me, it is to ensure that Doncaster's young people have more opportunities than their parents had, so they can have bright futures. As someone who cares about their community, I want every child in Doncaster to have a happy future. I truly believe that the transformation of Doncaster Sheffield Airport into a Freeport would go a long way in making this possible, which is why I am so passionate about this consultation.

Nick Fletcher, MP for Don Valley









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