

Shadow Chancellor visits London's major port

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PRESS RELEASE

SHADOW CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, ED BALLS MP VISITS LONDON'S MAJOR PORT

The Port of Tilbury, London's major port, today (2 February 2015) welcomed the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Ed Balls MP, and Polly Billington, the Labour candidate for Thurrock.

The Shadow Chancellor and Ms Billington were briefed on the key role Tilbury plays in the local and national economy and the significant investments being made at the port by the port and its tenants, that will this year (2015), amount to over £75million, creating over 300 long term jobs as well as a number of short term construction jobs.

The party were taken on a tour of operations to see for themselves the outcome of the multimillion pound investment across the port including London Container Terminal, one of the UK's largest container terminals which together with the rest of the port handles over half a million containers each year. Mr Balls and Ms Billington were also updated on The London Construction Link alliance between S Walsh and the port which offers construction solutions using water transportation for sites near or beside the Thames to relieve truck congestion on the Capital's roads.

There was also an update on the newly launched London Paper Terminal, which handles over 400,000 tonnes of paper products each year; and the new 70-acre distribution park on the outskirts of the port called the London Distribution Park which has begun construction of its first 110,000 sq.ft. bespoke warehouse. The park is the largest speculative development on the market near London and is expected to bring over 1,100 new jobs to the Thames Gateway area.

An overview was also given of the historic grade II listed London Cruise Terminal which is well underway with the upgrade of its passenger terminal facilities and the landing stage. The cruise business is an important tourism driver for the south east and welcomes over 50 cruise liners each year and over 50,000 passengers.

Mr Balls and Ms Billington also took time during the visit to meet with port staff, including apprentices and trainees, and union representatives.

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP, Shadow Chancellor, said: "Tilbury is London's engine, supporting Britain's economic growth. The port is the UK's gateway to Europe. Our relationship with Europe is an important factor in ensuring the port thrives. The new investment in Tilbury Port will have a positive impact on the local economy, by boosting the number of skilled jobs and apprenticeships."

Polly Billington, Labour Candidate for Thurrock, said: "The Port of Tilbury has shown enormous resilience in the face of the global financial crisis and increased competition. To prepare for the future changes in the industry, employers like the Port will need to continue to help develop the skills of the local workforce. Skilled secure jobs are essential to the economic success of our community, and they should be available and advertised for local people. It is good to see skilled jobs being created at the port with the prospect of more in the future. Let's make sure local people have the chance to fill those posts."

Commenting on the visit, Perry Glading, Chief Operating Officer at Forth Ports (owners of the Port of Tilbury), said: "Today was a great opportunity for Tilbury to showcase the port's pivotal role in supporting the UK economy, from supplying construction materials for housing schemes across the South East and large infrastructure projects like Crossrail to supporting the drive to improve recycling rates with the largest sorting and export facility in Britain.

"Key to the Port's strength is the continuous investment in our assets across the port estate. I was delighted that our staff, who are integral to that investment programme, were able to meet the Shadow Chancellor today. Having a skilled workforce is key to delivering the service level our customers expect from a major port. We are an important employer in the area with over 800 people directly employed at the port and we contribute to the local economy with over 8000 jobs depending on us to continue to be successful."

The Port was one of the first organisations to launch the Government's new traineeship programme and supports the National Apprenticeship Service. The Port's team is working with the Government to help design a funding model which will work through HMRC systems to route apprenticeship funding direct to employers in the future (Apprenticeship Reform Roundtable). In the last two years the Port has taken on 30 apprentices (5% of the workforce) with imminent plans to take on a further 15.

2 February 2015

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Notes to editors:

About The Port of Tilbury - the major gateway to London and the South East

The Port of Tilbury is London's major port, providing fast, modern distribution services for the benefit of the south east of England and beyond. A dynamic and diverse port handling the full range of cargoes with specialist expertise in the handling of paper and forest products, containers & Ro Ro, grain and bulk commodities and construction and building materials.

Tilbury's strategic location makes it the natural point for distribution with 18 million people living within 75 miles. Serving the UK's market, the port offers customers excellent transport links to and from the capital and across the South East where over 50% of the population live and work.

The Port is a diverse multi-modal hub, covering over 850 acres and is well positioned to access the M25 orbital motorway and the rest of the UK's national motorway network. In addition, there are direct rail connections within the Port, with access to the whole of the UK and dedicated barge facilities.

London Container Terminal (LCT) provides a unique combination of European Short Sea and Deep Sea services at the same facility. As the UK's third largest container terminal, Tilbury handles over half a million containers per year.

The London Construction Link (LCL) is a collaboration between the Port of Tilbury and S. Walsh, one of the leading construction solutions companies in London. The partnership is seeking to relieve congestion on the capital's roads, with associated cycling safety and CO2 benefits, through promoting greater use of construction consolidation and the use of the river for construction projects on or near the Thames. LCL builds upon the Tilbury's pedigree as the logistics and distribution hub for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and S. Walsh's success as the largest marine operator on the Thames. LCL is supported by British Cycling.

www.forthports.co.uk / www.londoncontainerterminal.com / www.londondistributionpark.com

Major investments: skills training and people

After nine years of discussions between interested parties, the Port took the initiative and spent £228k on refurbishing a former LOCOG building to create a training centre, the Logistics Academy of East of England. The facility provides the existing Thurrock workforce with the necessary training opportunities and logistics pathways to help secure the 13,000 transport and logistics jobs – including 1,100 jobs at the Port’s new distribution park – arising in the Thames Gateway area in the coming years.

The Port was one of the first organisations to launch the Government’s new traineeship programme and supports the National Apprenticeship Service. The Port’s team is working with the Government to help design a funding model which will work through HMRC systems to route apprenticeship funding direct to employers in the future (Apprenticeship Reform Roundtable).

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In the last 2 years we have run over 30 apprenticeship programmes including, Customer Service Apprenticeships, Cruise & Terminal Operations Apprenticeship, SHEQ Apprenticeship, Engineering & Procurement Apprenticeship, Grain Terminal Operative Apprenticeship, Bulks Operative Apprenticeships, 4 year Engineering Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships in Management (Level 3). Plus we have run pre-Apprentice Logistics Traineeships for 18-14 year olds (which are not included in the 30).

In terms of overall skills at Port of Tilbury – we are currently running at 32 plant operator skills per operational employee, with a total of approx. 13,000 trained plant skills in the Port.

The Port is part of a partnership comprising of Thurrock Council, Job Centre Plus, Ixion Holdings (part of Anglia Ruskin University) and others to deliver:

- pre-employment training
- traineeships
- apprenticeships
- advanced apprenticeships
- higher apprenticeships