

Tilbury2 freight ferry terminal has opened for business, with new rail terminal set to open later this year

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A new £250 million freight ferry terminal has opened for business, transforming the market with the UK's largest unaccompanied port.

Tilbury2's brand new unaccompanied freight ferry terminal has opened, which allows freight to be transported into the UK without truck drivers.

The 500,000-unit freight-only facility will inject state-of-the-art capacity into the country's ports sector by utilising a truck driver-free operation at a time when infection control is uppermost in everyone's mind.

Meanwhile a strategic rail terminal which can accommodate the longest freight trains of 775m is set to open later this year.

The whole project is central to the Port of Tilbury's £1 billion investment programme during 2012-20, which has seen it double the size of its business in the past 10 years.

It is projected to double the volume of cargo across the quay from 16 million to 32 million tonnes, and increase direct employment from 3,500 to 12,000 jobs.

Charles Hammond is Group Chief Executive of owners Forth Ports. He said: "This is an important time for the UK as we emerge from the lockdown.

"Our new freight terminal is the country's most modern ferry port offering a seamless and lower carbon route to the biggest consumer market in Europe, Greater London.

"Despite the current challenges we have delivered a resilient terminal with significant headroom to grow as we pursue our vision of being the nation's strategic freight gateway to-and-from Europe. We believe that this terminal opening is a symbol of hope for economic recovery."

Maritime Minister, Kelly Tolhurst said: "Barely a year since getting the green light from my Department, the opening of the Tilbury2 unaccompanied ferry terminal really is a landmark moment for this major infrastructure project.

"It is a great testimony to all those who worked on the build that it has been finished and opened, despite the current challenges facing the maritime sector. The new terminal will provide more capacity and jobs at a vital time, when our world-leading ports will be at the forefront of the UK's economic recovery."

Leo Martin, Managing Director, Civil Engineering at GRAHAM, said: "The opening of the Tilbury2 ferry freight terminal is a major development in the Port of Tilbury's expansion and will support economic growth at a local, regional and national level.

"We are extremely proud to have played our part in the construction of such an important infrastructure project, which will undoubtedly unlock further potential for freight transportation between the UK and mainland Europe."

Tilbury2 is a new port at the former Tilbury Power Station on the north bank of the River Thames on the outskirts of London. When fully operational later this year, Tilbury2 will be the UK's largest unaccompanied freight ferry port, the country's biggest construction processing hub and will see the creation of a new significantly larger rail head which can accommodate the longest freight trains of 775 metres.