



UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF THE UK'S COAST



The UK Major Ports Group, was really pleased to support a Maritime UK webinar on the 22nd February exploring what 'levelling up' could and should mean in the context of the UK's coast.

The webinar brought together representatives of industry, regional maritime cluster organisations, local and national Government to look at not only the challenges but also, crucially, the opportunities of the UK's coast. The call took place against the background of the Government's recently published flagship Levelling Up White Paper.

What the call demonstrated were the unique opportunities and issues of the coast, the passionate people and organisations looking to drive forward prosperity and opportunity and that the Government is very much in the market for good ideas and projects that support Levelling Up goals. To go back to the context, the UK's coast (and when we say coast we're also including our major estuaries too) is one of our nations' great assets.

Just to give the some examples:

- It has been – and continues to be – our main trading gateway with the world and a great place to locate businesses engaged in this trade
- The coast and seas off it are fundamental to the green energy revolution that is essential to the UK's zero emissions future
- And of course its populated by amazing passionate people, surrounded in many cases by important habitats and life enhancing coast line



And yet our coastal communities can be amongst the poorest in the UK. They can experience significant challenges in areas like health educational attainment.

This is not in every community of course. But you can find communities that face these challenges all around the coast of the UK. This goes way beyond easy categorizations of 'north vs south divides'. There is a real divide between the coast and inland areas even within the same regions.

Addressing these challenges – one might almost call it 'levelling up' – requires a range of activity. Industry recognise that it has a part to play as part of this activity.

Businesses are not charities, but the money they invest, the wages they pay and the way they work with local stakeholders and environments can all have important positive roles to play.

This is already happening – hundreds of millions of pounds of investment each year, jobs that are 25% better paid than the national average let alone local benchmarks, more productive and more skilled.

But maritime industries like ports are ambitious to grow investment and positive impact.

In the Coastal Powerhouse Manifesto Maritime UK, in conjuncture with the Coastal Special Interest Group, has set out a number of very practical steps Government and others can take to help realize this ambition.

You can read more about the Manifesto [here](#), but proposals include areas like transport and energy connectivity, responsible development rules and skills and human capital development.

The UK's coast has remarkable, unique advantages. But it also, too often, faces significant challenges. In the maritime sector, as well as in the communities themselves, there are people ambitious to play their role in meeting these challenges and 'levelling up our coast'. We, as industry, want to work with Government and others to make this happen and have real proposals for how this can happen.

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