

ADDENDUM TO ITEM 3 - FREEPORT PROPOSITION

In response to a number of questions stakeholders had raised about the Governments Freeports policy and bidding process, Government has produced a Freeport Clarification Q&A document which aims to cover the key questions and themes that were received.

Two of the questions raised relate to the letter of support that stakeholders, including the Council, are being requested to write in support of the Freeport bid. The two relevant questions identified below should provide members with some reassurance that the letter of support is in principle only and does not fetter its discretion as the local planning authority.

Letters of Support

85. What is required in the letter of support from local authorities, and who needs to sign it?

- Bidders are required to submit a letter showing their proposal enjoys the support of the local authority or local authorities that will need to play a part in delivering it.
- This letter does not, therefore, need to be signed by all local authorities within the proposed Outer Boundary if they will not be involved in that.
- The only mandatory signatories required to pass/fail are:
 - A single local authority able to be accountable to central government for the Freeport's allocated seed capital funding and for the allocation of retained business rates;
 - Any local authorities in which a proposed tax site is located;
 - Any local authority on whose planning process the Freeport proposal depends (e.g. development of a customs site).
- For some bids ,this will mean only a single local authority signatory is needed; for bids reliant on multiple local authorities' planning processes or with tax sites in multiple authorities, the signatures of each is required.
- Any additional signatories (LEPs or other local authorities within the outer boundary) are welcomed but not mandatory.
- We do not expect different signatories (if there are multiple) to be making different commitments in the letter and so encourage bidders to submit a single letter for the sake of simplicity. Bidders may, however, submit multiple letters if they would prefer.
- The government expects local authorities to work collaboratively with Freeport bidders and not to withhold letters of support for viable bids unreasonably.

86. Local authorities are being advised that a letter of support could pre-judge or prejudice local authorities' planning processes. What should they do about this?

- The letter of support does not need to commit its signatory/signatories to anything in particular and should not be taken as a guarantee that the Freeport proposal, if successful, would clear local planning processes; it must simply show that the signatory/signatories will support the bid should it succeed, subject to local planning.

The full Freeport Clarification Q&A document can be found on the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953311/Freeports_Clarification_QA.pdf