

A Modern Port:

95% of goods come into the UK through the country's ports. The Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary is an important shipping route and in 2006 over 20 million tonnes of cargo was handled the Severn Estuary's ports. Since 1991 the tonnage handled by The Bristol Port Company has increased from 4 million to 13 million and the turnover has risen from £22 million to £75 million. The port currently provides 7,660 jobs as substantiated by SWRDA report.

There is a national need to address the shortage in the UK's deep sea container port capacity, as container volumes are forecast to increase from 7 million to 20 million TEU (Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit Containers) by 2030. The Bristol Port Company is addressing this need by proposing a new 1.5 million TEU capacity deepwater container terminal on the site of a former oil terminal in Avonmouth Docks. The new deep water container terminal will be designed to service existing large container ships and future generations of ultra-large container ships. In order to accommodate these vessels, redevelopment and reclamation of an area of land for a new 1.2km quaywall and container handling and storage facilities will be required. It will also be necessary to widen and deepen the existing approach channel for these vessels.

The benefits of sighting such a deepwater port at Bristol include:

- Provide container import/export capacity for UK
- Closest deep sea port to the population and the market
- Enabling large ships to bring cargoes close to the centre of the UK, so reducing lorry miles and producing emissions and cost savings
- Recognised as fastest growing deep sea UK port by Government Study
- Natural deep water channel already exists within 1 mile of the port
- Utilise existing excellent road and rail links
- Transshipment opportunities
- Create 1500 new jobs and protect existing jobs
- Generating additional regional GDP
- Support developing local distribution market

A Harbour Revision Order and Environmental Statement for the Bristol Deep Sea Container Terminal was submitted to the Department for Transport on the 22nd of July 2008 and a 42 day statutory consultation period ended on the 2nd of September 2008. A public inquiry which was scheduled for January 2009 was cancelled by the Secretary of State following the withdrawal of objections from all parties who objected to the application for a Harbour Revision Order. It is anticipated that the Secretary of State will grant a Harbour Revision Order later this year and it is possible that a deep water container terminal could be operational by 2013/2014.

John Chaplin & Anne Hayes – Bristol Port Company