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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair,
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

23 January 2025

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 20 December on behalf of the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, in relation to the temporary closure of the Port of Holyhead. Noting the cross-portfolio nature of the issues raised, this is a joint response on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning and myself.

We fully share the Committee's concerns about the potential short and longer terms impacts as a result of the temporary closure and have sought to ensure that all Members have been kept informed of the collaborative action being taken by the Welsh Government and partners, particularly the Irish Government.

Given the speed of events and subsequent responses, the substantive points you raise are largely addressed through the following statements which provide a chronology of the rapid collective action undertaken:

[Written Statement: Port of Holyhead Closure \(14 December 2024\)](#)

[Joint Communique from the Welsh Government and the Irish Government - Port of Holyhead \(17 December 2024\)](#)

[Written Statement: Welsh Government Update Following the Temporary Closure of Holyhead Port \(19 December 2024\)](#)

[Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales: Port of Holyhead \(7 January 2025\) – Item 5](#)

[Written Statement: Welsh Government Statement Following the Reopening of the Port of Holyhead \(16 January 2025\)](#)

We are naturally very pleased that it has been possible for the port to re-open for businesses on 16 January, resuming normal capacity for both ferry operators through the use of berth 5 and making adjustments to the sailings timetable. This should significantly remove the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

challenges that have been faced by the logistics sector and passengers on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Throughout the temporary closure we have collaborated closely with the UK Government and Irish Government, speaking frequently with our ministerial colleagues, including regular discussions between the First Minister and the Taoiseach.

With specific regard to affected business and workers, and cognisant of the potential local and regional economic impacts, we are also working closely with the Isle of Anglesey County Council, which is currently gathering evidence of the potential impact of the closure, including via a survey available on their website for businesses to complete. As of the end of last week, it had received 40 responses. Over 72% of those are from the hospitality, retail and beauty sectors, 18% from logistics and associated services with the remainder being “other” sectors. Common themes were concerns that a reduced number of sailings would impact future revenue and concerns that there would be decreased confidence in Holyhead Port. Whilst the re-opening of the port should address a significant element of those concerns, we are conscious that new challenges may arise. We will jointly review this evidence on an ongoing basis and consider any necessary action following the closure of the survey at the end of January.

Looking forward, to support the port's recovery and minimise the risk of similar events in the future, we have announced the establishment of a Welsh Government-led, multi-stakeholder taskforce. This taskforce will develop a new strategy for the future of Holyhead, focusing on the resilience of sea connectivity between Wales and Ireland. The taskforce will include representatives from the Welsh and Irish Governments, the UK Government, local authorities, regional businesses, logistics bodies, and surface transport operators.

Our plans also involve significant investment in the port's infrastructure. We are committed to ensuring that the port's breakwater can be maintained, allowing the port to remain usable for many decades to come. This investment is crucial in safeguarding the port against future severe weather events and other hazards.

The above illustrates the Welsh Government's commitment to working with all stakeholders to ensure that the port of Holyhead not only recovers, but thrives, providing economic benefits to the region and maintaining its strategic importance in the UK-Ireland trade corridor.

We will of course keep the Committee and other Members of the Senedd informed of developments and would be happy to provide further information if required.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Skates AS/MS

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a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and
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