



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**            **Border Controls on imports into Wales from Ireland**

**DATE**            **24 June 2025**

**BY**                **Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet  
Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**

The Border Target Operating Model, including arrangements agreed by the UK, Welsh and Scottish governments to protect our biosecurity and food safety, was published in August 2023. It set out the post-Brexit requirements of border controls on imports from the EU, including that live animals and goods such as foodstuffs could only be imported through a point of entry with a border control post (BCP).

In line with those arrangements, the Welsh Government commissioned construction of a BCP on our land at Parc Cybi in March 2024 to ensure that Holyhead - the busiest ferry port on the Irish Sea, with over three quarters of imports to Great Britain from Ireland - would be able to continue to operate. As with BCPs around Great Britain, HM Treasury provided funding for construction – in Holyhead’s case, £44m out of a cost of £51m incurred up to the end of 2024-25. Construction of Holyhead BCP is now nearing completion, and the building is expected to be handed over to Welsh Government this autumn.

In May 2025, the UK Government announced a Common Understanding with the European Union (EU) with a view to negotiating a ‘Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary Area’ that could, if agreed, exempt many imports of live animals and goods from sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) checks at the border. Details of the agreement are still to be negotiated. We remain engaged with colleagues in the UK Government who are leading these negotiations, and with colleagues in the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive. We are also committed to ensuring an acceptable level of biosecurity protection over the interim period whilst the agreement is negotiated and implemented.

The Senedd will recall that, although physical and identity checks on imports from the EU began on 30 April 2024, no start date has ever been announced for SPS checks on imports from Ireland. I have decided not to proceed with the final commissioning and staffing of the Holyhead BCP, and not to take forward construction of BCPs at Fishguard and Pembroke Dock. I will keep that decision under review until the final details of the agreement with the EU are known. We will then be able to make longer-term plans for the Holyhead site. In the meantime, it is crucial that it remains ready and available as a potential BCP facility.

The Welsh Government remains committed to providing sufficient notice for traders and delivery partners should any new border checks need to be introduced.

The need for new border control facilities across Great Britain flows directly from the original decision to withdraw from the EU. The costs associated with maintaining the Holyhead facility in a state of readiness, without commissioning it for border control functions, are a result of ongoing UK-EU discussions on the SPS agreements. These discussions stem from the original decision to withdraw from the EU.