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## **Review of Port of Felixstowe's Vehicle Booking System - VBS phase 2**

This letter forms part of a consultation process to make port users aware of proposed changes to our Vehicle Booking System (VBS) and to seek your feedback. We introduced VBS in 2007; in part this was to address our planning obligations for our new container terminal, Berths 8 & 9, as well as to improve the service we offer to the haulage community.

VBS has been a success; we have demonstrated our commitment to reducing the impact of traffic on the local road network by influencing the arrival profile of hauliers at the port and, importantly, increasing the number of containers exchanged once here.

We are aware that there are a number of areas where VBS is not working as well as it could and we are looking to address these this year. In particular, the level of incorrect or incomplete bookings at the time of arrival at the port, the number of bookings taken but failing to arrive and the number of vehicles arriving outside their booked slot all reduce our ability to deliver the full benefits of VBS.

We are therefore proposing a series of operational changes and associated charges to improve the operation of VBS and to encourage greater use of the port's resources outside peak times. Further to initial consultation with the Felixstowe Port Users Association (FPUA), the proposed changes are:

- Provision of a new service of pre-allocated bookings to hauliers that meet certain criteria. This means that a minimum number of bookings would be pre-allocated so would not be booked through VBS.
- Altering the VBS system so that any bookings not having containers associated with them within a set number of minutes prior to the booking time starting, will be automatically returned to the VBS system exchange for use by other customers.
- Introduction of a small number of guaranteed bookings which can be secured, at a cost, in addition to the general booking pot. These slots will be limited.
- Introduction of a No Show charge to reduce the number of bookings made by hauliers which fail to be utilised.
- Introduction of a charge per booking for periods of high demand to recover an element of the costs associated with maintaining operations during peak times and to further encourage haulier arrivals during off peak periods.
  - For bookings with accurate information provided within the timeframes expected, the booking charge would be cancelled if indicative service levels were not met.
- Reintroduce the Late Notification flag for information being changed on a VBS booking within a set number of minutes before the booking time commences. Empty containers would be exempt from this. Any bookings identified as Late Notifications would not qualify for cancellation of the booking charge.

In response to feedback we have already amended our initial proposals. The haulage community consulted to date have expressed a preference for a simple charging scheme rather than a charging structure based around a range of elements. Any charges introduced will therefore be in line with those discussed at the initial launch of VBS and prevailing industry practice.

At this point, we have no confirmed go live date for these changes. This will depend on the scale of changes to be made, and will be confirmed on completion of the consultation process.

In addition we are also considering further future changes although these will not be implemented with those changes proposed above:

- Introduction of charges for secondary gating activities for those unable to complete processing at the gate complexes.
- Introduction of a charge for the use of a Remote Access Code.
- Introduction of a mechanism to enable hauliers to request a report for a VBS booking which will detail the containers exchanged and times.

We remain committed to providing all our customers with a first class level of service and to working in a collaborative manner with port users. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the proposed changes to VBS can be found on the Port of Felixstowe VBS website. If you would like to comment on the proposals outlined in this letter, please provide your feedback via the email address [VBS2feedback@fdrc.co.uk](mailto:VBS2feedback@fdrc.co.uk) by 11 March 2011. We will not respond to all individual comments although will provide feedback in a further letter and updated FAQs after that date.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Gledhill', written over a horizontal line.

**David Gledhill**  
Chief Executive Officer

February 2011