

**Press release**

**For immediate release**

## **Wave of changes at North East port**

DEMOLITION of a 150-year-old engine works at a burgeoning North East port has paved the way for growth plans that will breathe new life into its docks and free up a swathe of land for future development.

Clearance of the George Clark site at Hudson Dock in the Port of Sunderland was completed by Buckler Demolition of Middlesbrough earlier this year. Originally home to North Eastern Marine engine works and famous for manufacturing ships' steam engines and boilers, the 1865-built facility had become unfit for purpose and posed safety concerns.

Leased to a ship-repair company until recently, the decision to demolish the premises came as part of a wider programme to forge ahead with growth plans by creating space from disused land to attract new businesses and strengthen the port's commercial offer.

Matthew Hunt, port director at Port of Sunderland, said: "Once part of Sunderland's shipbuilding and marine engineering heritage, the George Clark Ltd building well and truly served its purpose over the years, but the dilapidated building did raise safety concerns. Demolition has helped to open up a large capacity of land, perfect for port-related developments, which in turn, will steer further opportunities for business through the port."

He added: "Having seen a significant increase in the volume of traffic at the port, and more and more business being done here, it is vital that we maximise every asset we have. The demolition work, and indeed a raft of other developments at the port over the last few months, are all helping us to become even more attractive to customers."

Coordinated by Sunderland City Council City Services Department in conjunction with the Port of Sunderland, further work undertaken at the port has included construction of a new gatehouse and road layout at the main entrance that will help improve traffic flow and provide an improved working environment for security staff.

Associated work has seen replacement of signage, lighting, traffic barriers, fencing and CCTV enhancement. In addition to its primary security role, the gatehouse can be utilised for other port-related purposes, including management of road cargo haulage.

Mr Hunt added: "There are a growing number of businesses including some major players operating in the offshore field that are choosing Port of Sunderland as their base. It is therefore important for us to ensure that we are able to accommodate their needs as well as enabling port staff to operate as effectively as possible.

"The changes we are making will not only enhance our offer to businesses based here, but will also make Port of Sunderland an even more attractive location for potential customers seeking a base."

Councillor Paul Watson, leader of Sunderland City Council and chair of the Port of Sunderland board, said that the demolition reflects the port's clear strategy for growth and development.

He said: "The Port of Sunderland is a fantastic facility that has already carved out a strong reputation, attracting work from some of the major players in the oil, gas and renewable sector. The recent demolition, along with further investment in infrastructure, only bolsters the port's offering and opportunities for growth. We are committed to supporting the port throughout every stage of its development as it positions itself as a leading player in the sector on both a regional and national stage."

For more information about Sunderland and the Port of Sunderland visit [www.makeitsunderland.com](http://www.makeitsunderland.com), email [info@makeitsunderland.com](mailto:info@makeitsunderland.com) or call +44 (0) 191 305 1194.

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