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New Freeport Investment Chief to Lift UK Economy

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Humber Freeport has appointed Richard Beason as its new head of investment, tasking him with spearheading efforts to draw in fresh business and accelerate economic development across the Humber region.

Richard Beason has joined Humber Freeport as Head of Investment, after serving as Economic Development Manager at Selby District Council and North Yorkshire Council, where he led inward investment activity. In those posts, he led high-profile investment campaigns and supported business expansion initiatives. His previous roles include work

with Birmingham City University as Growth Hub Account Manager and as a business adviser at East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, as well as running his own firms.

As Head of Investment, Beason will collaborate with the Humber Freeport Board, the UK Government and regional stakeholders to develop propositions in sectors such as clean energy and advanced manufacturing, which align with the region's low-carbon transition strategy. The Freeport's tax and customs sites, positioned near major transport links, are designed to give investors clear advantages in logistics and trade, making the region more competitive against rival hubs in Europe.

Commenting on his appointment, Beason said: "This is a really exciting time to be joining Humber Freeport. The opportunity for the Humber is now, and the Freeport has an important role to play as a catalyst for inward investment, economic growth, and skilled job creation."

Supporting him is Michele Tavender, who joins as Executive Support, overseeing communications and stakeholder engagement. She previously worked as a management assistant at Lindsey Oil Refinery in Immingham and the North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Simon Green, CEO of Humber Freeport, welcomed the appointments and highlighted that more than £1.2 billion in investment had already been pledged to Humber Freeport tax sites. "The expertise and experience both Richard and Michele bring with them will be invaluable to the Freeport, as we look to deliver on our key objectives and lay the foundations for a prosperous future for the Humber," Green said.

He noted that the UK Government's Industrial Strategy had positioned freeports as central to its growth and economic renewal agenda. While some critics have questioned the effectiveness of these zones, proponents argue that competitive tax incentives, simplified customs arrangements, and targeted infrastructure investment offer a clear path to stronger local economies and skilled employment.

Green urged potential investors to engage directly with Humber Freeport to learn more about the incentives available. "Our message to investors is a simple one: come and speak to us, tell us what you need, and discover everything the Humber region has to offer," he said.

Although Labour ministers face pressure over economic performance, Humber Freeport's leadership intends to showcase how locally driven, pro-business strategies can deliver results without solely relying on central mandates.

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