

CMA CGM FEEDER SERVICE EXPANSION BRINGS INCREASED GLOBAL TRADE TO LIVERPOOL

--- World's third largest container shipping company offers growing links between Asia, north west UK and Ireland ---

--- £300m Liverpool2 project will bring post Panamax container ships to expanding hub from 2015 ---

Leading worldwide container shipping group CMA CGM has backed Peel Ports' £300m Liverpool2 development by doubling the frequency of its feeder service to the port.

CMA CGM now offers twice-weekly calls in Liverpool from its hub in Le Havre, France, and a new weekly call at Greenock, Scotland, and Cork, Ireland. Weekly calls to Dublin and Belfast were already established.

The company's expansion into Liverpool will take advantage of Peel Ports' established Green Highway Network, a shuttle service which carries freight 44 miles inland using the Manchester Ship Canal.

Ross Thompson, commercial director of Peel Ports, said: "CMA CGM is a valued partner on vital Irish Sea routes, and this expansion demonstrates not only its commitment to Liverpool, but its confidence in the continuing growth in global trade to and from the port.

"Increasing capacity in this way means container carriers unloading at the completed Liverpool2 development from across the globe will benefit from rapid, seamless forwarding of goods to Ireland and Scotland, as well as on to Europe via CMA CGM's hub in Le Havre.

"This development also shows the combined value of Peel Ports' assets in Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast and Greenock and how these can serve the market around the Irish Sea Hub as well as providing a low-cost solution for empty containers to be returned by ship and refilled."

The new route will see deep sea containers – which have been transported to Europe from the Far East – coming in to the Port of Liverpool on a feeder service from Le Havre twice a week. The service will go on to call at Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Greenock once a week.

The service will also allow empty containers that would otherwise be moved to Greenock via road or rail to be transported by sea. These containers will serve the Scottish drinks export market, and be shipped back to the Far East.

Peel Ports owns container terminals in Dublin, Belfast and Greenock. The ports are linked by ships from BG Freight Line and Coastal Container Line, also owned by Peel Ports, making up the company's Irish Sea Hub network.

Rob Waterman, CMA CGM UK chief executive officer, said: "This development underlines CMA CGM's commitment to the Port of Liverpool and its desire to improve service levels to customers in the north west."

The Port of Liverpool carries more than 33m tonnes of cargo every year, and is the UK's leading west coast port.

When completed in 2015, the Port's deep-water container terminal, to be known as Liverpool2, will accommodate two of the new breed of post Panamax container ships at one time.

The development will attract some of the world's largest container vessels to a centrally-located UK distribution hub which boasts a population of 35 million consumers within a radius of 150 miles.

Peel Ports' investment – funded by a £35 million UK Government Regional Growth Fund grant – will

enable container ships from around the world to connect directly with the northern half of the UK and Ireland, and so serve an annual market estimated at around four million TEUs.

Work has already started on the Liverpool2 project, with dredging operations to create a 16.5m-deep berthing pocket well underway.

Ends

22 July 2013