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UK's First Electric Shipping Routes Set to Slash Irish Sea Emissions by a Third

- Heysham Port to receive its first berth-side shore power plug in 2026, scaling to four plugs across all berths.
- The initiative will establish the UK's first green shipping corridors between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, resulting in an annual reduction of over 10,000 tonnes of CO₂.
- Investment supports sustainable economic growth directly and through greener logistics.
- Total project cost of around £10 million, delivered by NatPower Marine with Peel Port Group's operational support.
- Part of a £100 million UK-wide roll-out of e-ship charging across all Peel Ports Group locations.
- Heysham is the starting point for NatPower Marine's route-based clean port network in the Irish Sea. NatPower is developing a global network of 120 sites worldwide by 2030.
- NatPower UK is also developing 12.5 GW of renewable capacity and 100 GWh of battery storage to ensure a stable, low-cost clean energy supply for ports.

Heysham Port to Pioneer UK's First Green Shipping Corridor

NatPower Marine and Peel Ports Group are set to commence installation of shore power at Heysham in September 2025, with the first plug live in the initial phase and expansion to four across all berths, by 2026. This will enable all Heysham routes within the Irish sea to operate with zero emissions while at berth and at sea, supporting full electric propulsion of the ferry services, as the first part of the full electrification of the Irish sea.

The investment supports the UK Government's industrial and economic growth objectives through more sustainable passenger and freight routes. NatPower Marine is further developing partnerships with other ports and shipping operators in the area.

Once all four berths at Heysham are electrified, the infrastructure will enable vessels in the Irish sea routes to reduce CO₂ emissions by more than 10,000 tonnes per year, alongside significant reductions in NO_x and SO_x.

Building a Net Zero Port

The investment is expected to total around £10 million, with NatPower Marine delivering the infrastructure and Peel Ports Group providing site and operational support. The Heysham initiative forms part of a wider £100 million partnership between NatPower Marine and Peel Ports Group to roll out e-ship charging infrastructure across for operator's in Great Britain and Ireland islands.

This work will accelerate Peel Ports Group's ambition for Heysham to become the UK's first net-zero port, building on its existing success in reducing landside emissions by up to 90% and significantly improving air quality in the surrounding areas.

When fully rolled out across all Peel Ports Group locations, shore power could reduce CO₂ emissions by up to 166,800 tonnes every year, alongside 2,180 tonnes of NO_x, 1,060 tonnes of SO₂, and 470 tonnes of methane. This demonstrates the scale of impact that port electrification can deliver in improving air quality and driving decarbonisation across the UK's busiest shipping routes.

Martin Olverson Development Director Marine of NatPower Marine said: *"Heysham is where the UK's first green shipping corridor becomes real. One plug will soon become four, serving every Heysham route to Ireland and giving operators the confidence to move quickly on vessel electrification. We are building the backbone of a clean shipping network so ferry and freight lines can invest in the next generation of zero-emission ships."*

Lewis McIntyre, Managing Director, Peel Ports Group, said: *"Shipping is already the greenest form of transport but there's still a huge role for ports to play in decarbonising the supply chain. We can only do that with collaboration, innovation and long-term commitment from everyone involved, which this project embodies. However, this goes far beyond environmental goals. Ports are the lifeblood of UK plc and so many of our national economic and social ambitions rely on a thriving maritime sector."*

Global Shipping Context

The global shipping industry is vital to the world economy, facilitating over 80% of global trade. However, the sector produces 3% of greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than the emissions of Germany, as well as 14% of nitrous oxides (NO_x) and 17% of global sulphur oxides (SO_x), highlighting the scale of the challenge to decarbonise the sector for the short-term health of our population and the long-term health of our planet.

As shipping lines increasingly look to electrify both at-port operations and at-sea propulsion in response to tightening regulations, demand for clean energy is set to skyrocket. To decarbonise the industry, 4 petawatt-hours (PWh) of clean energy per year is needed – equal to the annual electricity consumption of the USA.

NatPower Marine is addressing this challenge head-on by deploying the urgently needed infrastructure for e-ship charging, specifically for propulsion and cold ironing, starting in the UK. Earlier this year, the company announced plans to invest in a global charging network covering 120 port locations by 2030. Heysham Port, which is part of the £100m partnership with Peel Ports Group. NatPower is developing a global network of 120 sites worldwide by 2030.

To ensure the energy used at these ports is clean, NatPower is also developing over 12.5 GW of clean energy GigaParks projects in the UK, with 100 GWh of battery storage capacity, crucial for balancing intermittent demand, such as electric ship requirements for propulsion and cold ironing. These GigaParks will provide stable, clean electricity to NatPower Marine's UK port network via direct Power Purchasing Agreements or private wires.