

FBJ DECEMBER Q&A



Responses from Teesside Airport Managing Director Phil Forster:

Has the FedEx got off to a good start?

Yes, a good start. It was a great boost to have a company with the global pedigree of FedEx cementing their position on Teesside. The firm signed a five-year deal for an airfreight handling facility at Teesside to meet growing import and export demand after it relocated from Newcastle. They also signed a separate new five-year lease for their existing road operation based in Hangar 1.

On the back of its success, from 6 January the service will be scaling up from four to its full eight flights per week.

Do you see FedEx as a demonstration of the airport's capabilities to other operators?

We do. We're perfectly placed in the centre of Britain, with good links to road, rail and sea, and the agreement we have with FedEx demonstrates big players in the industry are sitting up, taking notice, and buying into what we're doing. We've a 2,291m runway with an on-site fuel farm – with Jet A1 and Av-Gas – and our surface

access has no HGV width restrictions. All the ingredients are there for our growth. Our status as one of the country's newest BCPs means we can handle flowers, fruit and vegetables. It really does bolster our ambitions – it's a positive start. Having [Steven Verhasselt, from FB Cargo Strategy, in our corner](#) is also a huge boost to our aspirations. His contacts, knowledge and expertise are invaluable to what we want to achieve.

Any other new cargo business at the airport – scheduled or charter?

We've picked up a number of last-minute car parts freight flights as companies have noticed our flexibility. We've had plenty of variety, too. For the Ebor Festival Races at York, we've seen horse charters into the airport, and in the past we've had automotive parts flown in on charter flights. With Steven and FB Cargo Strategy support, we hope to see a gradual build in business.

Cargo traffic volume at the airport and future prospects

The market in Northern England is under-developed on cargo. With the support of Steven, we're looking at the perishables market from Africa, in flowers, fruits, vegetables but also from Southeast Asia, and specific products from this market, like mangoes.

E-commerce is another area Steven is working on – particularly for those tight turnaround times. Teesside has historically been a real gas, energy and chemical industry base – so that presents unique opportunities. Major pieces of equipment are likely to come by boat, but there are always spare parts, and there always urgent items required. The airport is available for charters for these when time is precious. It's an area where we can compete.

What will be the next stage of the airport's cargo development and what is the expected timescale?

Steven and FB Cargo Strategy are an important part of developing our cargo offer. We've recently welcomed aircraft painting company Airbourne Colours to the airport business park – and this means we have a base where we have aircraft maintenance with Willis, painting facilities with Airbourne, and refuelling on site. Added to that, we've welcomed a major tenant on the airport south side unit in car repair – so we're looking to diversify our offering across a huge airport site. These

things don't happen overnight. Liege took 20 years to turn into an airfreight juggernaut with Steven's help – but we have all the ingredients here, and we're working hard. The next year should see more tenants moving into the wider airport business park, so watch this space.

Any freeport-related activity?

Yes – healthy interest in area with a unit the Airport Southside seeing an automotive repair business setting up. This is set to be announced shortly. The 5G Digital Test Bed to offer more frictionless trade will be a big development as part of the Freeport customs zone.

Any further development of the 5G Digital Test Bed?

Yes – the multi-million-pound digital zone is seeing the foundations laid for physical building work to start. The area of the airport's north side will see a private 5G network cover a significant stretch. It's results and findings on trade, goods movements and processes should feed national policy – and we're hopeful it will yield cost and time savings not just for us, but the wider UK market. It places us at the forefront of trade, and it helps strengthen our place as a logistics hub.