

Icelandic ambassador welcomes trade deal on first visit to Grimsby

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Iceland's new ambassador to the UK has welcomed the recently agreed trade deal between the two nations on his first visit to Grimsby.

And Sturla Sigurjónsson hopes the North Atlantic nation can help the UK build back its own fisheries interests, while technical details over frictionless movement are ironed out to ensure the supply chain stays strong.

Mr Sigurjónsson enjoyed a full programme of visits and introductions, with consul, Grimsby solicitor Jonathan Goolden hosting.

Civic leaders, Icelandic shipping line Eimskip and end users of the nation's favourite export – from the artisan Alfred Enderby to the market leader Young's Seafood, were taken in after an early morning start on Grimsby Fish Market where 75 per cent of the sales are Icelandic.

Stopping at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre to take in the Ross Tiger trawler and newspaper cartoons from the Cod War era that will form part of a joint exhibition with the Icelandic Embassy, he said: "All my life I have been aware of the historical connection between Grimsby and Iceland, and I've

felt in Iceland I could sense the affinity of Icelanders towards the people of Grimsby.

“It has been a very pleasant first visit and I have been impressed with the vibrancy I have seen here. I’m particularly impressed with how people have adapted; when fisheries have declined, in has come wind power, and that seems to be extremely promising.”

Triton Knoll offshore wind farm was a further stop-off, after the Kasbah Heritage Action Zone.

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Of the [trade deal](#), which also includes Norway and Liechtenstein, he said: “It is very important to ensure continuity and predictability in our trade. That’s what the free trade agreement does. We have to work together closely on implementation, including technical issues not only due to the FTA, but to adapt to new ways after Brexit.

“As far as I can see we have keen interest in both sides to do that.”

Border controls for the fresh seafood being processed in Grimsby is seen as key. “It needs to move quickly,” he said.

Turning to the fisheries side, Mr Sigurjónsson, accompanied by his wife Elín Jónsdóttir, said: “We believe we can share experience with the UK, and with Grimsby in particular. We have exemplary fisheries management, we have learned a lot over the past 30 years – some the hard way – but it has been pretty successful.

“We’ve also discussed maximising utilisation of the catch – things we do have proved quite a success in Iceland – be it with cosmetics or pharmaceuticals.”