

# HMRC's office closure programme is about to be r...

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The [Harwich and Manningtree Standard](#) is not a usual source here, but a news report it covered seems highly pertinent in the light of the National Audit Office commentary on the preparedness, or otherwise, of the UK for a no deal Brexit. As they note:

*Concerns have been raised about Harwich's HM Revenue and Customs office being turned into houses while there are still uncertainties about the impact Brexit will have on ports.*

*Garry Calver, Harwich councillor, said: "We expressed great concern from the very beginning at the closure and sale of Harwich's Customs House before it was known what the impact Brexit may have on the port.*

*"It's clear now that these concerns were justified and there is great worry at how our port will be affected in a no deal situation."*

*The customs house was scrapped as part of a major overhaul of the service which will see the eventual closure of all HM Revenue and Customs offices in the East of England.*

*Work will be transferred to one super site in Stratford, east London, with the South-East also being served by a centre in Croydon.*

Harwich is one of the ports that will supposedly take more traffic if Dover becomes blocked after Brexit. Its Customs House has, however, been closed and [sold](#) as part of the HMRC rationalisation plan to which I objected for years. So now a crisis in the port will be managed from Stratford in east London, or Croydon in south London. It doesn't take a moment to work out how well that will go.

I argued throughout this whole closure programme that tax is not some remote, technical exercise but is instead a front line issue where government and people need to interact where people are. I think we are just about to find out how right that argument was.