

Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board held on 13 April 2023 at County Hall, Glenfield.

PRESENT

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

Phil Canning – Uniper
Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport
Stewart Kellie – Etwall Land Limited
Peter Ralston – Goodman
Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport

Local Authorities

Councillor Robert Ashman – North West Leicestershire District Council
Mr Lee Breckon CC – Leicestershire County Council
Councillor Keith Girling – Nottinghamshire County Council

Accountable Body Officers

John Sinnott – Chief Executive
Lauren Haslam – Director of Law and Governance
Nick Wash – Head of Service, Finance
Gemma Duckworth – Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance

Ruth Edwards MP
Richard Hiscoke – Bevan Brittan
Moez Khan - DLUHC
Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive, East Midlands Freeport

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Pilsworth, Councillor Kevin Richards, Councillor Simon Robinson and Julie Rossiter.

1.	<u>Declarations of Interest.</u> The Chair invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda. No declarations were made.	
2.	<u>Minutes.</u> The minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 March 2023 were taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.	

	<p>Further consideration would be given to what information to include in the minutes for this and future meetings in relation to sensitive/confidential items.</p> <p>At future meetings, a log of outstanding actions from the Board would be presented.</p> <p>An update from Goodman/Etwall Land Limited would be presented to the next meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Chair's Update.</u></p> <p>The Chair provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A two day visit to EMF by representatives from the Department for Business and Trade was due to take place in early May; this would include meeting with landowners to understand potential opportunities with stakeholders and any questions would be shared in advance. Consideration would also be given to customs sites, the current status and main priorities and opportunities. Once the visit had been completed, any feedback would be reported to Board members. A main focus of the visit would be to build on the narrative for EMF to promote itself to international investors. • A meeting had taken place to consider how to bring together innovation around hydrogen; this had included representatives from local universities. There appeared to be an appetite to focus on developing an innovation centre as this would provide an opportunity to further develop collaborative work in relation to the net zero agenda, provide space for concept demonstrator development and concurrently promote skills training. A smaller group of universities and key individuals was due to meet to consider the specification of the innovation centre and discuss funding. An issue was the data around current demand for hydrogen, but this was being explored further. • Discussions had taken place with De Montfort University around the skills programme, in particular how to deploy some EMF funding to assist with the skills gap. It would be necessary to consider how to future proof the needs of occupiers and how to assist those who were furthest away from the employment market. • In terms of stakeholder engagement, the Chair and CEO were due to attend the UKREiiF 	TN-T/NS

	<p>conference in May to speak and promote the Freeport and East Midlands. Feedback from this event would be presented to the next Board meeting.</p> <p><u>CEO Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews had recently taken place for the posts of Senior Programme Manager and Senior Communications and Stakeholder Manager and offers had been made. Further discussions had been taking place with partners around the potential for secondments into certain roles. • An update on the budget would be presented to the next meeting of the Board. • The draft MoU from DLUHC had now been received for signing. • The next monitoring and evaluation exercise was due to take place in May and support would be provided from DLUHC. • Work around Investor Journey support, in particular to confirm the process and reporting, would be presented to the next meeting of the Board. • Meetings were due to be held with FIN and FREN, which was Government support relating to skills, innovation and net zero strategies and the wider retained business rate investment strategy. 	<p>TN-T/NS</p> <p>TN-T</p> <p>TN-T</p>
4.	<p><u>Customs Site Update.</u></p> <p>A progress update was provided by Space Park Leicester following its designation as a customs site operator.</p> <p>The Board received a presentation from Company A on the possibility of applying to become a customs site operator. Members were in agreement with supporting Company A's application to become a customs site operator.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Seed Capital Refresh.</u></p> <p>The Board received an update on the seed capital funding strategy. Since the initial applications, there had been a number of significant changes (including cost inflation) and considerable time had passed. It was proposed that the Executive Team, with the support of WSP, undertake a review of existing schemes and a rapid refresh of the seed capital funding. A refreshed</p>	

	<p>shortlist of schemes would be produced for approval at the Board meeting in July and member organisations were asked to consider whether there were any alternative schemes that would better fit the seed capital objectives. Alongside this, a rebaselining of the tax site project plans would be undertaken and would feed into an updated retained business rate forecast. It was the intention that the Infrastructure and Sites Subcommittee would oversee the work.</p> <p>The Board agreed to all the recommendations made in the paper.</p> <p>Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Existing projects would need to be rated in terms of value for money for the Freeport. This would be discussed further with partners prior to consideration by the Infrastructure and Sites Subcommittee and then the Board. ii) It was agreed that it would be useful to circulate any proposals as early as possible to review, and also consider how the seed capital funding could be used, drawing on examples from other Freeports. 	<p>TN-T</p> <p>MK/AG</p>
6.	<p><u>Subsidy Control.</u></p> <p>The Board was advised that billing authorities had now received legal advice on subsidy control and this was discussed.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Information Security Classification and Document Control and Publication Policy.</u></p> <p>The Board considered the proposed policy to define how information was classified and to set out the requirements and arrangements for the circulation of information and publication of Freeport information.</p> <p>It was considered important to have a balance between openness and transparency (in line with Nolan principles) and recognising commercial/legal confidentiality issues, and it would be the responsibility of partners to notify if something should be treated as commercially sensitive/confidential when submitted to the secretariat for inclusion in Board papers.</p>	

	<p>Due to the forthcoming local elections, there would be a change in public sector membership. Assurance was given that the Accountable Body would notify local authority officers when any meetings were taking place during the transition period, but moving forward, it would be the responsibility of Board members (both public and private sector) to forward any papers to their officers. Ultimately, it was the intention to create a Sharepoint site for Board members to access papers.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Investment Zones.</u></p> <p>Following the recent announcement around Investment Zones, a number of discussions with individual partners had taken place. The Chair had received a letter from Sir John Peace on this issue and would need to submit a response.</p> <p>Members generally agreed that there was currently some uncertainty as to where Investment Zones would fit within the Combined Authority model and members did not want anything to jeopardise the primary objectives as a Freeport.</p> <p>Arising from the discussion, the Chair agreed to produce a response and would include the points that the Freeport was now operational and there would be a limited amount of inward investment for the East Midlands. There was a view that the region should become a super brand and whilst consideration was being given to a number of options, it was important to ensure that there was no duplication of efforts. Further discussion would be required to ensure the region benefitted and the guidance for both Freeports and Investment Zones would be compared to see how they could complement each other. The Chair's response would be circulated to Board members for comment, with a view to sending this by close of play on 17 April.</p> <p>It was suggested that any queries could be addressed by DLUHC at the forthcoming SRO Forum. Moez Khan confirmed that the application process would be similar to that for the Freeport, albeit less lengthy. Discussions were ongoing to ensure that it did not become a competitive process.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Marketing and Comms - Launch.</u></p> <p>An update was provided on the activity being undertaken for the formal launch of the Freeport. Currently,</p>	

	<p>consideration was being given to securing opportunities to explain the unique offer from the Freeport, with a focus on technology, innovation, skills and net zero.</p> <p>A range of events would be taking place over the coming months where there would be opportunities to promote the Freeport. Two key dates were the Midlands Economic Summit on 7 June and the East Midlands Expo in the autumn. A meeting of the Communications Subcommittee was due to take place in May to develop the comms strategy for the launch.</p> <p>A senior ministerial visit had been proposed as it was felt that this level of engagement at the launch was key. An engagement strategy was being developed, with a focus on liaising with local communities, politicians and stakeholders. Consideration would be given to what work had already been undertaken by partner organisations and how to develop this.</p> <p>As there was only one Board meeting before the economic summit, it was agreed that it would be difficult to finalise all the arrangements for a formal launch in time for June. It was therefore agreed to focus communications efforts on later in the year.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Governance Documents.</u></p> <p>Members were asked to complete the previously circulated documents, which were required for incorporation.</p>	ALL
11.	<p><u>Any Other Business.</u></p> <p>Consideration was being given to a Scheme of Delegation now that the CEO was in post. In order to understand the levels of expenditure, a financial overview would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.</p>	TN-T
12.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting.</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the Board would take place on 11 May 2023 at 2.00pm at Space Park Leicester.</p>	

2.00 – 4.35pm

13 April 2023

Chairman