

**Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board held on 10 October 2024 at Power Electronics and Machines Centre, University of Nottingham.**

**PRESENT**

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

Phil Canning – Uniper  
Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport (EMA)  
Peter Ralston – Goodman  
Ben Green (substituting for Andrew Pilsworth) - SEGRO  
Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport  
Julie Rossiter – Etwall Land Limited

Local Authorities

Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Councillor Tony King – Derbyshire County Council  
Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council  
Councillor Andrew Woodman – North West Leicestershire District Council

Accountable Body Officers

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

Executive Delivery Team

Dan Cooper – Head of Communications and Marketing  
Stacy Ford – Communications and Marketing Manager  
Katie Greenhalgh – Head of Green Growth and Inclusion  
Naomi Kwasa – Governance and Committees Lead  
Paul Miller – Head of Operations and Programmes  
Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive  
Jon Rawcliffe – Inward Investment Lead

Also in Attendance

James Arnold – Strategic Director of Place, North West Leicestershire District Council  
Max Aughton – Studio Egret West (SEW); for Item 10: Strategic Masterplan  
Barry Cummings – East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA)  
Amanda Hack, MP for North West Leicestershire  
Richard Hiscoke – Bevan Brittan for item 11: Governance Update  
Justin Ives – Chief Executive, South Derbyshire District Council  
Kath Marriott – Chief Executive, Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Official  
James Naish, MP for Rushcliffe

Ben Sumner – Innovation Cluster Director, University of Nottingham (UoN), for Item 7:  
Innovation Led Growth

1	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mr Lee Breckon CC, Councillor Keith Girling and Andrew Pilsworth, who was substituted by Ben Green.</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest.</u></b></p> <p>The Chair invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda.</p> <p>No declarations were made.</p>	
3	<p><b><u>Minutes.</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 September 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.</p>	
4	<p><b><u>Action Log.</u></b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the list of outstanding and completed actions since the last meeting.</p>	
5	<p><b><u>Chair's Update.</u></b></p> <p>The Chair thanked the University of Nottingham for hosting the Board and welcomed James Naish MP and Amanda Hack MP to the meeting. She noted that Samantha Niblett MP had been invited but was unable to attend the meeting and that she would arrange to speak with her separately. The MPs had also already been provided with background briefings on the East Midlands Freeport (EMF). She provided the following update on the EMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been significant progress on set-up, tax extension, communications and engagement and work is progressing across skills, innovation, net zero and transport.</li> <li>• The sites are progressing well, there has been further engagement with Toyota regarding the East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) and Ratcliffe Power Station has now closed which represents a major milestone.</li> <li>• There are some issues that require resolution including signing off the governance documents and important exercises to undertake including agreeing our vision and masterplan (following on from the Board Strategy Day).</li> </ul>	
6	<p><b><u>CEO Update.</u></b></p> <p>The CEO provided the following update on activity since the last Board meeting:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further discussions have been undertaken with Toyota at a senior level.</li> <li>• There has been engagement with Government as a group of Freeports to help them understand how Freeports can align with the objectives and manifesto of the new Government and stay relevant.</li> <li>• MHCLG have confirmed there will be an 'October Moment' policy note regarding Freeports, issued in October. It is good news that Ministers are engaging but important to understand the detail and avoid being drawn into a long policy reform process. MHCLG have asked for comments to be submitted by 18<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>• Ratcliffe Power Station closed at the end of September. Separately the EMF CEO presented, alongside Uniper, to a Rushcliffe Community Forum event with parish councils, who were broadly supportive of the ambition of the Local Development Order (LDO) for low carbon energy and manufacturing, although transport remains an important issue.</li> <li>• Engagement activities are being organised with communities around other sites.</li> <li>• The CEO also set out other significant events EMF had organised / taken part over September.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b><u>Innovation Led Growth</u></b></p> <p>The Board received a presentation from the Innovation Cluster Director, University of Nottingham, on Innovation Led Growth, including: an update on the EMF seed capital investment to support an innovation centre at Jubilee Campus; the University of Nottingham's ambitions for large-scale innovation-led areas, the need for space to scale up (which could be on Freeport tax sites); and how the Freeport can contribute to the vision. He posed the following questions to the Board for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the Freeport support innovation-led growth within the region?</li> <li>• How can the Freeport harness university expertise to support inward investment into the sites?</li> <li>• How could tax sites accommodate fast-growing and innovative companies? What barriers need to be addressed?</li> </ul> <p>The Chair emphasised the important role EMF had to play here, and that innovation was one of EMF's core objectives. Board raised points around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicalities of having smaller companies sited on tax sites including the need for financial backing, size of accommodation. More work was required on delivery models to help overcome some of these challenges for tax site owners. The role of EMF should be explored in this respect (e.g. related to our Retained Business Rates (RBR) strategy).</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of ongoing access to universities to the inward investment mission.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: EMF to continue to engage closely with the University of Nottingham, EMCCA and regional partners on shaping the regional approach. As part of this, EMF landowners would be brought into discussions (e.g. via masterplanning exercises) to consider the practical barriers and mitigations at our tax sites to accommodating smaller occupiers.</b></p>	KG
8	<p><b><u>Local Planning Authorities</u></b></p> <p>The Chair asked each of the Local Planning Authorities to provide an update on the status of their Local Plans and the following updates were provided:</p> <p><b><u>Rushcliffe Borough Council</u></b>  The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is due to go out to consultation on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 until just before Christmas with final adoption mid-2026, all currently on track.</p> <p>Ratcliffe Power Station has now closed down as a coal powered facility and is in the process of being decommissioned. An LDO is in place and final planning application for the extraction of gypsum is still yet to be approved.</p> <p>The main issues for any formal planning applications will be transport and connectivity to the motorway and rail terminal The impact on local communities will be taken into account when assessing applications.</p> <p><b><u>South Derbyshire District Council</u></b>  The Local Plan part 1 is in draft and has gone out to consultation from 7<sup>th</sup> October for approximately eight weeks. A significant part of this is to accommodate Derbyshire's housing needs and there are two large sites on the edge of Derby City for economic development, one adjacent to Rolls Royce and the Freeport site.</p> <p>The Council would value input from the Freeport on how they adapt their Local Plan to facilitate delivery of the EMIP site.</p> <p><b><u>North West Leicestershire District Council</u></b>  The Local Plan is reliant on the strategic infrastructure around the Freeport and aligning with new legislation coming from Government with the extension to the end of 2026 to get Local Plans in place.</p> <p>The council is reliant on working with county colleagues and Midlands Connect on the deliverability of the plan, the strategic settlement of several thousand houses and looking at the impact on the local network.</p>	

	<p>The Local Plan is going through the decision-making process this side of Christmas and that will inform further consultation.</p> <p>There are three strategic sites and major landholders – SEGRO is at the pre-submission phase, the statutory planning authority is considering the MAG application currently and Isley Woodhouse is at the pre-application phase.</p> <p><b>ACTION: EMF to engage with local and regional authorities proactively on their local plans and strategies, including responding formally to consultations (most immediately SDCC).</b></p>	<p>KG</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><b><u>Strategic Site Planning</u></b></p> <p>EMF Head of Operations and Programmes introduced the report and the preferred suppliers, Studio Egret West (SEW). The Board received a presentation from SEW on the development of a plan to create some cohesive design principles to connect the three Freeport sites. The consultant set out their proposals for the work including how they intended to make the Freeport stand out to attract investment and contribute locally and nationally. The Board had the opportunity to discuss the proposals.</p> <p>It was agreed that the exercise needed to achieve alignment with land developers, local authorities and EMCCA, working closely with each member organisation and promote the wider region.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated the importance of this exercise and the need to define the golden thread running through EMF's proposition. The team should engage SEW to start this work now; however, as an initial stage they should undertake detailed fact-finding, meet with partners and refine the brief before moving forward to the next stage. She asked all members to nominate an individual to engage with the Head of Operations and Programmes and SEW to ensure this is developed in consultation with members.</p> <p><b>ACTION: All Members to Nominate a named lead to support the work with Studio Egret West on the Strategic Masterplan to the end of the financial year.</b></p> <p>Following the discussion it was:</p> <p><b>AGREED that a refined phased brief would be presented to the Board in December detailing what the exercise will deliver at each phase and reflect costs. Board would need to sign off anything before public consultation commenced.</b></p>	<p>All Members</p>
<p>10</p>	<p><b><u>Governance Update</u></b></p> <p>The Board received an update on the EMF's governance documents. Following the discussion it was:</p>	

	<b>AGREED that an Extraordinary Meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board would be convened to finalise the governance documents.</b>	
11	<b><u>MHCLG Annual Performance Review</u></b>  The Board did not have time to consider this item and therefore the Chair asked that members send comments on the MHCLG Annual Performance Review to the Executive Delivery Team via email.	<b>All Members</b>
12	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>  There was none.	
	<b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b>  The next Ordinary meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on 12 November at 11.00am at a venue to be confirmed.	

1.00 – 4.00pm

10 October 2024

Chair