

Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board
Held on 20 June 2025 at 11.00am
At Uniper, Ratcliffe on Soar, NG11 0EE

PRESENT

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

Phil Canning – Uniper

Stewart Kellie – Etwall Land Limited (ELL)

Andrew Pilsworth – SEGRO

Ioan Reed-Aspley – East Midlands Airport (EMA)

Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport (Via Microsoft Teams)

Local Authorities

Allison Thomas – North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) (Via Microsoft Teams)

Joe Battye – Derbyshire County Council (DCC) (Via Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)

Edward Heathfield – East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

Derek Higton – Nottinghamshire County Council (via Microsoft Teams)

Adam Hill – Rushcliffe Borough Council

Dr Justin Ives – South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC) (Via Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Keith Merrie – North West Leicestershire District Council

Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council

Accountable Body Officers

John Sinnott – Chief Executive (Via Microsoft Teams)

Executive Delivery Team

Jonathan Bretherton – Head of Commercial and Development

Dan Cooper – Head of Communications and Inward Investment

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

Also Present

MHCLG Representative (Via Microsoft Teams)

1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Julie Rossiter who was represented by Stewart Kellie, and Steve Griffiths who was represented by Ioan Reed-Aspley. Apologies were also received from Peter Ralston.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed EMCCA's new Executive Director of Place, Edward Heathfield, to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the Board would not be taking any decisions at the meeting as a Director for the Accountable Body was required for the meeting to be quorate, and an LCC Director had not yet been appointed. She noted this would be discussed in further detail at Item 8 – Evolving EMF Landscape.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>The Chair invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda. No declarations were made.</p>
3.	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025 had been circulated and that these were for noting and would be presented for approval at the Board meeting in July, subject to quoracy requirements being met.</p>
4.	<p><u>Public Sector Directors Group Decision Note</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that the Public Sector Directors Group Decision Note had been included in the agenda pack for completeness. It was requested that further details be included in the decision notes highlighting an outline of the approved scope. The Chair AGREED that further information would be shared with Board members on this.</p>
5.	<p><u>Chair's Update</u></p> <p>The Chair asked officers from each of the County Council members to update the Board on their processes to appointing a new EMF Board Director.</p> <p>The Chair then provided an update to the Board, including highlighting key conversations that had taken place about the potential of the East Midlands for inward investment and EMCCA and EMF's place within that – in particular, the successful joint promotion at UKREiiF. She noted that she had also attended a parliamentary roundtable event with a number of other Freeports and that government feels Freeports are a valuable tool when aligned with mayoral authorities in presenting a comprehensive investment offering.</p>
6.	<p><u>Chief Executive's Update</u></p> <p>EMF CEO provided an update to the Board. He then asked the Head of Communications and Inward Investment to provide the Board with a brief update. The Head of Communications and Inward Investment detailed the key communications activities</p>

	<p>taking place including; an update on a recent Freedom of Information request to LCC, a roundtable meeting EMF's CEO had attended with the Minister of State for Investment, Poppy Gustafsson, and an indication of what to expect from the government's Industrial Strategy, due to be published on the upcoming Monday.</p>
7.	<p><u>Tax Site Updates</u></p> <p>Representatives of each of the tax sites provided an update to the Board on events and activities taking place across their sites.</p>
8.	<p><u>Evolving EMF Landscape</u></p> <p>The Head of Operations and Programmes provided an update to the Board. Regarding the Accountable Body transition, he highlighted that there is currently no critical path towards implementing the change and MHCLG have set the requirement for the change to be delivered by March 2026.</p> <p>The Chair then invited EMCCA's Executive Director of Place to comment, and they noted that EMCCA are looking to work through the options ensuring that the transition doesn't slow down the work of the Freeport and to ensure alignment with the government's objectives.</p>
9.	<p><u>Energy Infrastructure</u></p> <p>The Head of Green Growth and Inclusion provided an update to the Board on energy infrastructure. She noted that the Freeport had a focus on energy infrastructure as it not only fulfils the commitments agreed within the Full Business Case but aligns with local and government priorities. She highlighted the programme of agreed activity within EMF's Business Plan including energy baseline and pathways, energy planning, anaerobic digestion, the East Midlands Superhub and the Green Freight Corridor. She noted that challenges with energy infrastructure remain despite the activity underway by Members, particularly in securing connections within EMF timelines and futureproofing sites against future demands. EMF CEO noted that this work is designed to build up the evidence base to influence investment.</p> <p>The Board were asked to consider how the Freeport might add the most value within this space, and comments were made in regard to the scope of the carbon baselining work and also the need to align with Investment Zones when working towards decarbonisation. It was also highlighted that there are some good examples of investment in low carbon energy (e.g. nuclear) within the region and it would be good to explore how EMF might align with those. The Board also encouraged joined up thinking across the region in terms of sharing resources and intelligence, in particular with EMCCA regarding the opportunities that exist.</p> <p>The Head of Green Growth and Inclusion AGREED to share the brief on carbon baselining and welcomed comments on it, specifically in relation to modelled scenarios for site development and how EMF might respond. EMF CEO confirmed that he is keeping close to what is happening with energy in the region.</p>

10.	<p><u>Skills Outreach Initiatives</u></p> <p>The Head of Green Growth and Inclusion provided an update to the Board on skills. She noted that skills delivery is a core objective of EMF's business case, and confirmed the Skills Delivery Plan would be presented to the Board for approval at the next Board meeting. The Executive Delivery Team had been working to develop the evidence base for the Skills Delivery Plan and align with regional activity, particularly EMCCA and East Midlands Investment Zones.</p> <p>She highlighted that a Skills and Community Fund, approved as part of the Investment Strategy, aims to deliver early, positive impact in the communities served by the Freeport, with an initial focus on skills and employability, through funding delivery partner activity over the next 6 months. Further detail would follow at July Board, including a proposition around additional funding/support from public and private sector partners.</p> <p>The Board raised comments around inclusion of the key skills required in the plan, as well as the need to align the phraseology with economic growth strategies across the region to ensure the message reaches the local communities.</p>
11.	<p><u>Subcommittee Updates</u></p> <p>EMF CEO provided an update to the Board on Subcommittees.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Delivery Subcommittee had been a good discussion, and the team have received useful feedback to focus on cross-cutting issues and blockers for the Subcommittee to troubleshoot.</p> <p>S151 Subcommittee had reviewed and approved the draft Procurement Plan, as well as the initial business rates relief application, seed capital conditions and controls and general oversight of EMF funding.</p> <p>The Audit, Risk and Compliance Subcommittee had been postponed following the local elections and had been rescheduled for 29 July 2025.</p>
12.	<p><u>Board and Subcommittee Forward Look</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the Board and Subcommittee Forward Looks. EMF CEO noted that these would be shared as a recurring item on the Board agendas going forwards.</p>
13.	<p><u>Action Log</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED that actions from its previous meeting(s) had been completed, overtaken or were on the agenda and NOTED the list of outstanding and completed actions since the last meeting.</p> <p>A comment was made that it would be useful to show within the Action Log both the target date and the expected dates for completion of actions.</p>
14.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>

The Chair thanked Uniper for hosting the meeting. The meeting ended at 1.32pm.

11.00am – 1.32pm, 20 June 2025

Chair: Nora Senior