Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board
Held on 21 July 2025 at 2.30pm
On Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

Phil Canning – Uniper
Peter Ralston – Goodman
Ben Green – SEGRO
Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport (EMA)
Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport
Julie Rossiter – Etwall Land Limited (ELL) (until 3.15pm)

Local Authorities

James Arnold – North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC)
Joe Battye – Derbyshire County Council (DCC)
Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)
Richard Grice – East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)
Derek Higton – Nottinghamshire County Council
Leanne Ashmore – Rushcliffe Borough Council
Mike Roylance – South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC)
Councillor Keith Merrie – North West Leicestershire District Council
Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council
Councillor James Walker Gurley – Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Carol Wood – Derbyshire County Council

Accountable Body Officers

John Sinnott – Chief Executive
Nick Wash – Head of Finance
Kay Springthorpe – Head of Procurement

Executive Delivery Team

Katie Greenhalgh – Head of Green Growth and Inclusion
Paul Miller – Head of Operations and Programmes
Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive
Nadia Ansari – Senior Project Officer

Also Present

MHCLG Representative
Adam Swersky - East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Justin Ives who was represented by Mike Roylance, Allison Thomas who was represented by James Arnold and Adam Hill who was represented by Leanne Ashmore. Richard Grice attended from EMCCA. The Chair advised there were new Directors from DCC (Cllr Robert Reaney) and NCC (Cllr James Walker Gurley). Unfortunately, Cllr Reaney was not able to attend so his alternate from DCC was in attendance (Cllr Carol Wood). The Chair updated the Board that the quoracy issue had now been resolved so this Board and the following Public Sector Directors Group (PSDG) could take decisions as usual. The Chair reminded Board and new directors about the importance of respecting commercial confidentialities – and that discussions at Board should be treated as such. There was a question raised about whether the Member approval for historic Board decisions had been resolved. The CEO advised that the issue had been split from the quoracy issue, and the delivery team would communicate separately on approving historic Board decisions.
2.	<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.
3.	<u>Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 23 April 2025</u> The Chair noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025 had been circulated in the June agenda pack and were now being submitted for formal approval now the Board was quorate. The Minutes were AGREED as a correct record.
4.	<u>Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 20 June 2025</u> The Chair noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2025 had been circulated and that these were presented for approval. The Minutes were AGREED as a correct record.
5.	<u>Chair's Update</u> The Chair provided an update to the Board. The annual performance review and assurance review had now been received in draft from MHCLG. There were no major concerns, and EMF had been commended for its work in standing up the team and site delivery. The recommendations from the review included moving more quickly on seed capital investments and near term community benefits. The Chair advised the final

	version would be shared with the Board following review at the Audit, Risk and Compliance Subcommittee. There had been a useful visit to Maritime's new rail terminal and offices - the Chair thanked Maritime for hosting. The Chair had attended the EMCCA business advisory board meeting which had received a further report on investment for consideration. The Chair had been nominated to sit on the investment committee board for EMCCA which would help align with the Freeport activities. The Board was provided with an update on the upcoming strategy day session in September. Members would be receiving details in due course, but the session would cover an induction for the new directors, a review of the regional landscape and alignment, and consideration of strategic risks and opportunities. The Chair noted it would be beneficial to hold the session "off-site" as it provided an opportunity to build informal networks and spend time together. The hope was that the Mayor would be present, and directors were asked to prioritise their attendance. The Board was advised there was a PSDG meeting to follow. The items for discussion would be the business rates relief gateway process, an additional seed capital request for funding (relating to extra transport modelling work) and skills funding (related to the skills paper at this Board meeting).
6.	<u>Chief Executive's Update</u> EMF CEO advised the Board a written update had been provided with the agenda pack, and he would only provide a short verbal update due to time constraints. He highlighted that the Government had removed safeguarding for the eastern leg of the HS2 project. This was good news as part of the line runs through M1 Junction 24 and would contribute towards the progression of the project to improve the junction and resolve some of the congestion issues. It had been a concerted effort between EMF and other partner organisations across the East Midlands to persuade Government to make the decision. The Board was advised to read the newly published Industrial Strategy and accompanying Industrial Strategy Zone Action Plan which confirmed the importance of Freeports, now under the umbrella brand of "Industrial Strategy Zones"; and emphasised the need for alignment with mayoral authorities and investment zones. Conversations were underway with colleagues at EMCCA, and a further discussion would be held with the Board at the strategy day session in September.
7.	<u>Communications Update</u> The Board was advised there had been positive media coverage over the industrial strategy including an article in the Financial Times. The quarterly community forums with EMIP and Ratcliffe had taken place and had been broadly positive.

	EMF had attended the Rushcliffe Borough Council Scrutiny Committee session which met to discuss the Ratcliffe site development plans. This highlighted the need for clearer communication on site progress and development plans.
8.	<u>Quarterly Financial and S151 Subcommittee Update</u> An update was provided by Leicestershire County Council's Head of Finance. The Chair asked NWL for an update on the NNDR near-term forecast review. NWL director confirmed that officers were working hard and that consultants were about to be commissioned to undertake this work. **ACTION:** The Chair reiterated the importance of this work and asked that NWL expedite delivery. Following discussion the report was **NOTED.**
9.	<u>Skills Delivery Plan</u> Adam Swersky, Interim Director of Skills and Employment at EMCCA, joined for this item. EMF's Head of Green Growth and Inclusion introduced the report which presented the Skills Delivery Plan for consideration and approval by the Board. The key points were highlighted which included the need to have the right pipeline of skills and talent in place to support investment in the sites and to drive Freeport benefits into local communities. There was an appreciation from EMCCA for all the work completed and engagement that had taken place and it was clear that the plan was complementary to EMCCA skills workstreams: supporting people into the early stages of work, accessing jobs and supporting people into higher level roles. It was seen as a positive strategy that would support a lot of people. A comment was raised by DCC about the outcomes and how these could be refined to demonstrate and capture the impact the plan will have. **ACTION:** The Skills Delivery Plan will be reviewed ahead of finalisation, factoring in comments received. NCC's director was supportive of the plan, noting his role on the EMCCA skills group and was keen to champion alignment with EMF activity. It was felt that further reference to the Industrial Strategy Zone Action Plan and the role of Skills England could be incorporated. Following the discussion, the Board **AGREED** the recommendations to; a) Approve the Skills Delivery Plan incorporating comments above. The full draft will be circulated, and any further comments are invited by 13th August 2025. The Plan will only return to Board for additional sign off if there are any substantive changes required.

	b) Approve the publication of a version of the Skills Delivery Plan following review by the Communications Working Group. A query was raised as to whether Board Directors or other colleagues (e.g. skills experts) should sit on the Skills Working Group. EMF would consider and respond to Members.
10.	<u>Procurement Policy and Scheme of Delegation</u> The LCC Head of Procurement attended for this item. The Head of Operations provided the Board with an update on the EMF Procurement Policy and Scheme of Delegation. The key principle of the scheme of delegation was to maintain strategic oversight and control while enabling the EMF team to work in a more efficient way and deliver quickly on the Board's objectives. The Procurement Policy followed the template used by Government and had been developed in close collaboration with the accountable body. The policy took a "framework first" approach which would ensure consistency and provide value for money. Both documents had been scrutinised by the Section 151 Subcommittee and received approval. Some minor amendments were suggested by the Subcommittee which have been incorporated, but their overall comment was that proposals marked an "eminently sensible" way to manage public money and deliver the objectives of EMF. One Member raised a concern about the format of the Procurement Policy, and that there wasn't enough explicit recognition of "value for money" as a guiding principle. LCC Head of Procurement provided reassurance that this was the standard format for public procurement policies, an efficient approach for EMF's small team, and that value for money was an essential component and sits at the heart of taking a "framework first" approach – but that the language will be updated to make this even more explicit. The Board AGREED to: 1. **Approve** the proposed Scheme of Delegation, with any suggested amendments already reported, and agree it can be shared with the Accountable Body and Members for final approval. 2. **Note** that the Scheme of Delegation will become operational immediately once approved by Board and Members. 3. **Note** the proposed Procurement Policy at Appendix 2, which includes delegations set out in the Scheme of Delegation – revise to incorporate comments which were noted and recirculate along with the Scheme of Delegation for final sign off.
11.	<u>Board and Subcommittee Forward Look</u> The Chair advised that this item would be dealt with via email correspondence due to lack of time.

12.	<u>Action Log.</u> This item was deferred to the next meeting.
13.	<u>Any Other Business</u> The Chair advised that the agenda would be sent out for the strategy day event in September. The meeting ended at 4.05pm.

2.30pm – 4.05pm, 21 July 2025 Chair: Nora Senior