

Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board
Held on 22 January 2026, at 10am, at Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford, NG2
7YG.

PRESENT

Directors

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)

Ben Green – SEGRO (Via Microsoft Teams) – until 12.26pm Andy Read – Uniper

Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport (EMA)

Peter Ralston – Goodman

Councillor Robert Reaney – Derbyshire County Council (DCC) – from 11.20am (Via Microsoft Teams)

Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport

Julie Rossiter – Etwall Land Limited (ELL)

Councillor Tony Saffell – North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC)

Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC)

Councillor James Walker-Gurley – Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)

Accountable Body Officers

Simone Hines – Director of Finance

Zafar Saleem – Assistant Chief Executive

Executive Delivery Team

Christian Cadwallader – Strategic Engineering & Technical Lead – For Item 9

Dan Cooper – Head of Communications and Inward Investment

Katie Greenhalgh – Head of Green Growth and Inclusion

Nigel Hudson - Planning & Business Case Lead – For Item 10

Naomi Kwasa – Governance and Committees Lead

Paul Miller – Head of Operations and Programmes

Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive

Also present

Leanne Ashmore – RBC

Joe Battye – DCC (Via Microsoft Teams)

Allison Bennett – SDDC (Via Microsoft Teams)

Richard Grice – East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

Derek Higton – Nottinghamshire County Council

Matthew Taylor – National Highways (Via Microsoft Teams) – for Item 9

Allison Thomas – NWLDC – until 12.26pm

MHCLG Representative (Via Microsoft Teams)

1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Phil Canning, who was represented by Andy Read, Andrew Pilsworth who was represented by Ben Green and Mr Harrison Fowler. It was noted that Councillor Robert Reaney would be joining the meeting slightly late.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>The Chair invited members who wished to do so to declare an actual or perceived interest in respect of items on the agenda.</p> <p>Councillor Tony Saffell made a declaration in relation to Item 10, Planning Representations in that he holds the Planning Portfolio as an elected member of a Local Planning Authority, North West Leicestershire District Council. The Chair also noted that members from SEGRO and East Midlands Airport held an interest in the same item, however, no individuals would be required to leave the meeting room as this item was for information only and no decisions were being asked of the Board.</p>
3.	<p><u>Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 27 November 2025</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting on 18 December 2025 were AGREED as a correct record.</p>
4.	<p><u>Chair's Update</u></p> <p>The Chair provided an update to the Board. She highlighted EMF's renewed focus for 2026 on delivery and investment across the Freeport sites. Significant opportunities are expected to land in the coming year, and the Mayor has been clear that EMF remains an early strategic priority.</p> <p>Reflecting on lessons from last year, the Chair proposed increasing space for Board deliberation earlier on in decision-making cycles. To support this, the Board will move to an alternating pattern of paperless (or near-paperless) meetings from February, alongside a greater use of discussion papers—such as those tabled at this meeting on Transport and Business Plan priorities. The Chair noted the need to balance enhanced deliberation with the fast pace of delivery, and invited Board feedback on whether the current approach strikes the right balance, recognising that some decisions will still need to be taken quickly.</p> <p>The Chair noted a forthcoming Freeport Chairs meeting and offered to feed back as appropriate</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update.</p>
5.	<p><u>Chief Executive's Update</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive provided an update to the Board.</p>
6.	<p><u>Member Update – Accountable Body Transition</u></p>

	<p>The Chair requested an update from LCC and EMCCA representatives on the Accountable Body (AB) transition work.</p> <p>EMCCA's Strategy and Delivery Lead reported that work continues to progress well, with no identified barriers at this stage and activity remains on track.</p> <p>LCC's Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that solicitors have agreed a consolidated document list, and work has moved into an administrative phase. The service agreement is being reviewed, and further discussions are due to take place with EMF's Delivery Team regarding this. EMCCA have produced a detailed project plan for the transition, and work remains on target for the March deadline. It was agreed that necessary conversations would continue between LCC and EMCCA prior to a further update at the February Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair updated the Board on a productive recent meeting between EMF and Jane Moore, LCC's newly appointed CEO, noting both the concerns raised around geographic representation and her positive, forward-looking approach to progressing AB transition.</p> <p>LCC's Head of Finance highlighted two financial elements, in that AB-related financial responsibilities should transfer to EMCCA as soon as possible, while operational financial support could continue to sit with LCC for a longer period.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update and that further information would be presented at its meeting in February.</p>
7.	<p><u>Communications Update</u></p> <p>The Head of Communications and Inward Investment presented a communications update to the Board. He noted that over the next quarter, EMF's communications programme is designed to highlight genuine delivery, build momentum around the Freeport's progress, and strengthen EMF's visibility with government, investors and regional partners. Much of the focus remains on public affairs, where the Delivery Team are working to widen influence, mitigate development risks, and secure political and stakeholder support.</p> <p>Government Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement continues with key targets across HMT, MHCLG, DBT and DfT. Further engagements are scheduled with Simon Lightwood MP and both Miatta Fahnbulleh MP and Jason Stockwood MP, and these present opportunities to reinforce EMF's priorities and secure support in advance of the parliamentary event <p>Communications Materials and Upcoming Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team are now developing the tools needed to tell a stronger, more compelling story about the Freeport's regional impact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a new impact video for social media, - refreshed external messaging, incorporating feedback from the Board,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new site marketing materials to support inward investment, and a refreshed Inward Investment Strategy. • The team are also preparing for publication of Board profiles and registered interests as part of EMF's transparency commitments.
8.	<p><u>High-level Delivery Framework 2026-31</u></p> <p>The Chair introduced the item, emphasising the intention that the framework should meaningfully define “success” and support a more robust, delivery-focused Business Plan.</p> <p>The Head of Operations and Programmes presented the discussion paper seeking Board input and approval on the proposed priorities for EMF for the next five years. The purpose of the paper was to inform development of a full Business Plan 2026–2031 which will be presented for Board approval in March, alongside the 2026/27 budget.</p> <p>The paper built on the 2025/26 Business Plan and reflected the organisation's increasing delivery maturity, the growing volume of programmes supported, and the need for clearer articulation of “what good looks like” over the next five years.</p> <p>The Head of Operations and Programmes outlined 12 proposed priorities, including indicative outputs for the next 12 months and draft Board-level metrics. He advised that the next step is to develop the priorities into programme timelines, risks, KPIs and relevant governance arrangements, alongside the detailed budget. He asked the Board to test whether the priorities were at the right level; whether they were over- or under-ambitious, what trade-offs should apply under capacity or funding constraints, and what risks, KPIs and metrics the Board would most value for oversight.</p> <p>The CEO noted that the framework represented a continuation of last year's direction rather than a radical shift, with an emphasis on “turning up the dial” as delivery accelerates and the organisation enters a new phase.</p> <p>The Board had the opportunity to discuss the paper. The Chair noted that the Board's feedback would be incorporated into the Business Plan to strengthen clarity on EMF's delivery role by site, improve prioritisation and sequencing, and sharpen the approach to risks, dependencies, metrics and value for money. She noted that detailed actions are more appropriately captured in the operating plan, with the Business Plan setting strategic direction, delivery framework, milestones and timelines. The next steps would be for the Delivery Team to develop the framework into the full Business Plan to reflect Board feedback, and the updated content will be socialised ahead of the March Board, ensuring alignment with EMCCA. The CEO welcomed the offer of Board members from the public and private sector to act as a critical friend during the next stage of development.</p> <p>Following the discussion the Board APPROVED the proposed priorities and approach for preparing the Business Plan 26-31 and Budget for the next financial year (April 2026 to March 2027).</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Update on EMF Transport Strategy</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Councillor Robert Reaney who joined the meeting at this point, and Matthew Taylor from National Highways who attended virtually for this item.</p> <p>EMF's Strategic Engineering & Technical Lead introduced the report. He outlined progress since the seed capital decision in October, which has been positively received by partners. National Highways' initial strategic assessment—from J23a to J25—identified a range of potential options, all demonstrating strong value for money. National Highways is now progressing further analytical work, with an update expected in April.</p> <p>The next step is development of a full Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for J24, including a longlist of options, deliverability considerations, planning routes, and value for money assessment.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the extensive engagement that has taken place with National Highways and local partners, noting alignment across public and private sectors. He emphasised that this is not an EMF-led proposal alone but a collaborative regional strategy.</p> <p>National Highways welcomed the partnership approach, confirming strong alignment with National Highways' objectives and early positive study work and noting the confirmed commitment to complete the next assessment stage by Autumn 2026.</p> <p>Following the discussion it was AGREED that the Board;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the current approach and progress made on M1J24 capacity enhancement, including the integrated multi-modal transport proposals; • NOTED the new governance framework for multi-stakeholder coordination; and • NOTED plans for the Parliamentary event on 3 March 2026. <p>The meeting broke for lunch at 12:26.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Planning Representations</u></p> <p>The meeting reconvened at 12:50.</p> <p>EMF's Planning & Business Case Lead presented an overview on the four planning responses submitted by EMF, namely, the East Midlands Gateway Phase 2, 24/00727/OUTM - Land South of A453 Ashby Road North of Hyam's Lane Castle Donington, Leicestershire, 25/02015/LDO Proposed Revisions to Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order and East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Material Change. It was noted that all responses were prepared in line with EMF's governance framework and scheme of delegation, with appropriate consultation undertaken with affected parties, whose comments were reflected in the final submissions.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update provided.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>Quarterly Financial Update</u></p>

	<p>LCC's Director of Finance presented the report which provided an update on the latest projected RBR revenues, operational expenditure budget actual spend and forecasts, seed capital and project operational budget position and overall near-term forecast going up to 2028/29.</p> <p>Following the discussion the Board NOTED EMF's current financial position.</p>
12.	<p><u>EMF Governance Update</u></p> <p>EMF's Head of Operations and Programmes provided the Board with an update on EMF governance. He noted that this item was intended as an introduction, with a fuller paper and substantive discussion to return to a future Board meeting.</p> <p>He outlined proposals to strengthen decision-making processes across the Board and PSDG, reflecting feedback from several Directors, the aim of which is to improve clarity, assurance and transparency around how decisions are informed, shaped and ultimately approved. He emphasised the need for clearer protocols describing the engagement between officers and the Board ahead of decision points and committed to defining a standard operating procedure and assurance framework for consideration.</p> <p>The Board had the opportunity to discuss the update.</p> <p>Following the discussion, the Board NOTED the update and AGREED that the proposals will be further developed, supported by legal advice, to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflicts of interest, • handling of confidential and commercially sensitive information, • timing and sequencing of Board and PSDG engagement, and • clarity of decision-making roles and responsibilities. <p>A full paper will return to a future meeting for substantive discussion and agreement.</p>
13.	<p><u>Board and Subcommittee Forward Look</u></p> <p>The Board NOTED the Forward Look and received an update on recent Subcommittee activity;</p> <p>Delivery Subcommittee EMF CEO reported on the November meeting, noting work underway to strengthen how risks and mitigations are identified and presented. A further session is planned following the 5 February meeting to allow the Subcommittee to contribute more proactively to risk assessment, helping address earlier feedback about clearer sight of risks in support of business planning.</p> <p>Audit & Risk Subcommittee (ARC) An update was provided on the ARC Subcommittee meeting held on 14 January, chaired by EMCCA's Executive Director of Place. The Subcommittee reviewed its Terms of Reference and discussed the scope of a light-touch governance review in the coming period, mindful of wider LGR and integration developments. ARC also considered the top corporate risks.</p>

	<p>S151 Subcommittee LCC's Director of Finance noted that the S151 Subcommittee met on 14 January and discussed Junction 24 and associated risks. The Subcommittee will continue to scrutinise financial and risk implications as the programme progresses.</p> <p>Remuneration Committee (Remco) The Remco meeting took place on 18 December. As the Remco Chair was not in attendance, it was agreed that an update would be provided at a future Board meeting.</p> <p>Board Forward Look The February meeting is expected to be paperless or near-paperless. A representative from the EM Trade Union Forum will attend for part of the meeting to discuss their role and the value they can contribute.</p>
14.	<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>On action 9 - Delays with VOA to be raised with MHCLG Policy Leads, the MGCLG representative noted that other Freeports were facing the same issue and that he would raise this.</p> <p>The Board requested that an action be added to the Action Log to reflect the need for contracts register. EMF CEO agreed this would be shared with the Board.</p>
15.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>The meeting ended at 1.30pm.</p>