Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board
Held on 15 May 2026, at 10.00am, Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT

Directors

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Councillor Abby Brennan – Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)
Phil Canning – Uniper
Ben Green – SEGRO
Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport (EMA)
Councillor John Lawson – Derbyshire County Council (DCC)
Peter Ralston – Goodman
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

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

Leanne Ashmore – RBC
Joe Battye – DCC
Nigel Dolan – Goodman
Jason Harris – Goodman
Edward Highfield – East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)
Derek Higton – NCC
Mike Roylance – SDDC
Allison Thomas – NWLDC
MHCLG Representative

1	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Cllr Clarke who was represented by Cllr Brennan, and Andrew Pilsworth, who was represented by Ben Green. The Chair welcomed Cllr John Lawson to the meeting as DCC's newly appointed Director.
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> The Chair invited the Board to declare any conflicts of interest under the specific agenda items.
3	<u>Amended Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 27 March 2026</u> The amended minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 March 2026 were APPROVED as a correct record.
4	<u>Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 April 2026</u> The Chair invited comments on the draft minutes. A member of the Board highlighted that a further action should be included in the minutes in relation to the Trent Arc delivery, namely that, EMF should ensure alignment with private sector partners on the detail when shaping future proposals. A further amendment was noted to delete the phrase 'no clear mark of failure' in relation to a point made about duplication on the Business Plan budget and final approval. The Board AGREED the minutes, subject to the amendments noted, and the Chair confirmed the amended minutes would be recirculated.
5	<u>Minutes of the PSDG Meeting held on 27 March 2026</u> These minutes were presented for information only and would be formally agreed at the next meeting of the Public Sector Directors Group. The Board noted that the minutes were substantially redacted due to the fact it would be inappropriate to share details on a current live application for Business Rates Relief. The Board discussed the business rates relief process more broadly. It was noted that once the current application has concluded, there should be an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned, particularly in relation to clarity and transparency for investors. Members highlighted the importance of ensuring the process is sufficiently clear, navigable and provides an outcome as early as possible, particularly for major occupiers whose investment decisions are contingent on outcomes. It was clarified that while EMF undertakes an assessment and PSDG provides a recommendation, the final decision rests solely with the relevant Billing Authority, which is not bound by the Freeport's recommendation.
6	<u>Chair's Update</u>

	The Chair noted that, given only three weeks had passed since the previous Board meeting, there were no substantive updates beyond the items covered on the agenda. She reminded the Board that unanimous Member approval was required for the immediate governance changes relating to EMCCA becoming the Accountable Body and appointing a Director. The Board **NOTED** the update.
7	<u>CEO Update</u> The CEO provided a brief update to the Board, noting that Board members were invited to raise any questions on papers outside of the meeting if required. He highlighted the Strategic Forum which had taken place earlier in the week involving Chief Executives from EMF, EMCCA and Leicestershire authorities, and informed the Board that the EMF team has now relocated to offices at Clifton Campus, Nottingham Trent University. Board members and partners were invited to use the space for collaboration. In response to feedback from private sector directors, the CEO confirmed that monthly engagement meetings with private sector partners would be introduced from June. It was noted that this would require adjustments to the timing and format of the Operations Forum to accommodate the new arrangements, using existing diary slots. The Board **NOTED** the update.
8	<u>Subcommittee Update</u> The Board received an update on the Delivery Subcommittee meeting held on 6 May 2026, which was reported to have facilitated a constructive and open discussion. Feedback from attendees was noted to be positive and helpful, with the discussion informing subsequent thinking and future approach to the Subcommittee's work – particularly how it can continue to evolve to be a more powerful "engine" for EMF's work, both proactive shaping of project proposals as well as retrospective scrutiny of delivery. An update was provided on the S151 Subcommittee meeting held on 13 May 2026. It was noted that discussions were focused primarily on the EMIP item and, as such, feedback would be captured under that agenda item. The Board was advised that the April Remuneration Committee meeting was inquorate and therefore did not proceed. The next scheduled meeting will take place in September. In the interim, the RemCo Chair has agreed that any urgent decisions will be taken via correspondence, if required. The Board **NOTED** the update.

9	<u>Communications Update</u> The Board received an update from the Head of Communications and Inward Investment. He noted the requirement from Government for the Freeport to hold a public meeting and it was proposed that this be held in July immediately prior to the formal (private) Board meeting on 24 July 2026. The suggested format would include updates from the Chair and CEO on the Freeport's direction of travel and strategic priorities, short updates from site partners, and a public questions session. Questions would be submitted in advance, with provision for supplementary questions during the session. It was noted that the session would be promoted from June onwards through stakeholder networks, with opportunities for advance question submission and webcast access to enable wider participation. EMF will work with Board members' communications leads over the coming weeks to refine the approach and agree arrangements. It was also noted that a fuller update on inward investment and communications plans will be brought to a future Board meeting. The Board **NOTED** the update.
10	<u>EMIP Strategic Update</u> The Chair introduced the item which asked the Board to provide a strategic steer on the EMIP site. She emphasised that the full Board was not being asked to take decisions on public funding but to provide a steer as Directors of EMF, and that Board members should act in their capacity as company directors, citing any reflections or conflicts relevant per their roles as representatives of their organisations. Directors would be expected to declare any conflicts of interest and recuse themselves where appropriate. It was noted that there are multiple and complex conflicts to manage, including for private sector partners and potential competitors, and that confidentiality obligations, including NDAs, must be respected. Councillor Lawson declared an interest in that he sits on EMCCA's Investment Committee. The Chair also declared that she sits on EMCCA's Investment Committee. Councillor Taylor declared an interest in that he holds a policy role for planning for South Derbyshire District Council, including responsibilities related to the Local Plan, in which EMIP is included. He would not be required to leave the meeting as no formal decisions were being taken by the Board. It was also noted that Goodman and Etwall Land Limited (ELL) colleagues held a potential conflict of interest should the discussion progress to covering commercial points relating to the site. The Board agreed that Goodman and ELL colleagues should be allowed to stay in the meeting and contribute to as much of the discussion as possible as long as conflicts of interest are not in breach. Some concerns were flagged by public sector partners (including the Accountable Body) about the management of conflicts on this issue and the extent to which full Board should be engaged at this level of detail. The Chair outlined that in managing the discussion, relevant landowners would be given the opportunity to respond and answer questions at the start, discussion at full Board would remain at a strategic level, and any detailed considerations, including funding or business case matters, would be considered by the PSDG. The Board discussed the report.

	The Chair summarised the discussion. She noted that the conversation had been serious and constructive, with agreement reached on the strategic significance of EMIP to the Freeport and wider regional growth ambitions. Following the discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Board had confirmed the strategic importance of the EMIP site, acknowledged evidence of market failure, provided a strategic steer on roles and responsibilities of EMF and the Delivery Team, and had discussed the appropriateness and form of potential public sector intervention in the site.
11	<u>Governance Update and Assurance Framework</u> The Chair determined that this item be deferred to the next Board meeting to ensure enough time for discussion. The EMF Head of Operations invited attendees who had reviewed the paper in advance to provide any comments or queries directly to him ahead of the next meeting.
12	<u>EMF Supplementary Planning Document</u> This item was not considered due to time constraints.
13	<u>Action Log.</u> This item was not considered due to time constraints.
14	<u>Board and Subcommittee Forward Look</u> This item was not considered due to time constraints.
15	<u>Any Other Business</u> The Chair noted that the next Board and PSDG meeting will take place on Thursday 18 June at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). Members who have not previously visited NTU were asked to provide their car registration details to the Delivery Team to enable visitor parking arrangements. The Chair recorded formal thanks to Joe Battye on the occasion of her final Board meeting, recognising her contribution since the inception of the Freeport and wishing her well in her retirement. The meeting finished at 12noon.

15 May 2026, 10.00 – 12.00pm Chair: Nora Senior