

Public Board Questions

Question

The Power Station development, plus the other freeport and housing developments in the area, are putting considerable pressure on the network of local roads.

These were created many years ago to serve much smaller communities and are not suitable for the volume of traffic and the ever heavier vehicles now using them. During the LDO process a study of impacts on local roads was promised so that mitigations and enhancements could be properly planned. This has not happened.

The villages are through routes and road safety is compromised by speeding traffic and pedestrian/cycle movement is affected. There is some recognition of the impact on the main roads, including J24 of the M1, but not on the smaller ones. There seems to be an assumption that once J24 is sorted out that will be OK. But traffic doesn't only divert to the local roads when the main roads get congested - they use them by choice all the time, and sat navs send people that way.

So my question is – how is the Freeport assessing this impact and dealing with it, and what has happened to the study promised?

Response

We recognise your concern about existing traffic pressures, including on local roads through surrounding villages. Our transport work is therefore considering the wider network around Junction 24 of the M1, not only the motorway junction itself.

Technical work, modelling and early design are underway to understand current and forecasted traffic to develop potential interventions. This includes local road connectivity and resilience, freight and employee travel, public transport, walking and cycling. We are working with a range of organisations such as National Highways, local highway authorities, the local planning authorities, Government, East Midlands Combined County Authority and the private sector, to establish a solution.

The more detailed evidence on infrastructure requirements, delivery priorities, costs and indicative timescales will be brought together through an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will be subject to consultation. That process should provide a further opportunity for local evidence and concerns about village routes to be raised.

Our current plan is to have an agreed scheme by late 2027. Subject to agreement, approvals and funding, this could support the phased release of development and a longer-term strategic upgrade in the early 2030s. These remain indicative milestones rather than firm delivery commitments.

Uniper is also responsible for meeting conditions set by the Local Development Order around mitigating transport impacts. We are working closely with them to ensure our collective efforts align.

East Midlands Freeport does not itself determine individual planning applications or local highway mitigation, but we will continue to convene the responsible partners and make the case for a coordinated response.

Question

To date, the Board's infrastructure focus seems to have been on questions related to how to move goods (e.g. by ensuring that M1 Junction 24 has sufficient capacity).

There's a parallel question about infrastructure to enable employees to commute to the 28,000 jobs that the Freeport is expected to create.

None of the area's current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) incorporate analysis which treats the Freeport sites as the major trip-generators "in their own right" that they will become.

- Although the NW Leics LCWIP treats existing settlements (e.g. Kegworth & Castle Donington) as trip-generators "in their own right", it doesn't give the same status to future major employment sites, such as EMAGIC and Ratcliffe-on-Soar.
- The D2N2 LCWIP doesn't take account of the cycle-to-work desire-lines that there will be between Ratcliffe-on-Soar and settlements north of the Trent (Long Eaton, Toton/Chetwynd, etc).
- The D2N2 LCWIP and Staffs LCWIP don't even mention EMIP, let alone perform the origin-destination analysis needed to plan cycle-routes between EMIP and the settlements (Derby, Burton, ...) where EMIP employees are likely to live.

Will the Board consider commissioning an Active Travel Study, using LCWIP methodology, for the catchments of the 3 Freeport sites?

Response

We agree that access to Freeport employment sites needs to be considered alongside the movement of goods. Our wider transport programme is therefore looking at employee travel, public transport and walking and cycling connections, as well as highway capacity.

This work is at an evidence-gathering and option-development stage. We will consider whether a further active travel study covering the three site catchments is the most effective way to address the gaps you identify. Any decision would need to be agreed with the relevant transport and planning authorities and aligned with existing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan processes.

Linked to this is something called the Supplementary Planning Document: at the Freeport's request the three local planning authorities have adopted this policy which sets out how developers will pay their fair share to help fund the roads, transport improvements and other strategic infrastructure that is needed.

It received a wide number of responses that helped shape the final version. We have also committed to consult on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will set out the details sitting underneath the Supplementary Planning Document.

To be clear, our work on Junction 24 isn't just an infrastructure fix; it is a comprehensive solution that also considers public transport and active transport options that are required. This project aims to secure our competitiveness and positions the East Midlands as a region where business - and the people living here - can truly thrive.

Question

It strikes me that there are major bits of infrastructure outside the main Freeport sites that need fixing to secure maximum value. M1J24 is the most important one.

With the Government moving funding from transport and energy projects to defence, is there still a viable model to secure the funding we need?

Response

Junction 24 of the M1 remains a major infrastructure constraint affecting East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster site, Ratcliffe and the wider Trent Arc growth area. Current modelling indicates that the junction is expected to reach capacity in the mid-2030s even without Freeport-related growth.

We believe there remains a viable route to funding, but it is likely to require a blended approach rather than reliance on a single Government grant. Options being developed include developer contributions, retained business rates, regional contributions and future national transport funding, subject in each case to the relevant approvals and business cases.

East Midlands Freeport has allocated funding to progress technical work, modelling and early design, and is working with National Highways, Government, East Midlands Combined County Authority, local authorities and the private sector to develop an agreed, costed and deliverable proposition.

The programme will assess current and forecast demand across the wider network and consider phasing, public transport, active travel and local road resilience alongside the strategic junction solution.

Our current plan is to have an agreed scheme by late 2027. Subject to agreement, approvals and funding, this could support the phased release of development and a longer-term strategic upgrade in the early 2030s. These remain indicative milestones rather than firm delivery commitments.

Question

Will all workers in the freeport and wider tax area be allowed and encouraged to join their relevant trades union?

Response

Thank you for your question. Any company investing and operating in the Freeport must comply with all the UK's laws and regulations – whether that's security, safety, workers' rights, data protection, biosecurity, tax avoidance and evasion, and the environment – just like any other company. There is no difference.

We support good employment practice and constructive worker voice. We are engaging with trade union representatives to understand how this can best be reflected in our work, while recognising that employment arrangements and union recognition are matters for individual employers and their workforces.

Question

With development either side of junction 24, please confirm what is being considered in terms of further infrastructure ie roads etc?

Response

Junction 24 of the M1 remains a major infrastructure constraint affecting East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster site, Ratcliffe and the wider Trent Arc growth area.

Current modelling indicates that the junction is expected to reach capacity in the mid-2030s even without Freeport-related growth.

The work is considering the wider transport network around Junction 24, not only the motorway junction itself. This includes local road connectivity and resilience, current and forecast traffic movements, freight and employee travel, public transport, walking and cycling.

Technical work, modelling and early design are under way to develop an agreed, costed and deliverable proposition. East Midlands Freeport has allocated funding to progress this work and is working with National Highways, local highway and planning authorities, Government, the East Midlands Combined County Authority and the private sector.

The project will assess current and forecast capacity across the junction and surrounding corridor and identify the infrastructure and phasing needed to support planned growth. It will also consider public transport and active travel alongside highway improvements.

Our current plan is to have an agreed scheme by late 2027. Subject to agreement, approvals and funding, this could support the phased release of development and a longer-term strategic upgrade in the early 2030s. These remain indicative milestones rather than firm delivery commitments.

Linked to this is something called the Supplementary Planning Document: at the Freeport's request the three local planning authorities have adopted this policy which sets out how developers will pay their fair share to help fund the roads, transport improvements and other strategic infrastructure that is needed.

Questions

What proportion of future Freeport development is planned on previously developed land, and how do you justify any greenfield development in the context of UK's biodiversity and climate commitments?

What measurable biodiversity targets have been set for Freeport developments, and how will the public be able to monitor whether those targets are actually achieved?

At what point would the East Midlands Freeport say 'no' to an economically attractive development because the environmental and biodiversity impacts were too great?

What are the biggest infrastructure constraints currently limiting growth within the Freeport area, and what is the timeline for resolving them?

What evidence do you have that the East Midlands Freeport is creating new high-skilled engineering and manufacturing jobs, rather than simply moving existing economic activity, or planned jobs in the pipeline, from one part of the region to another?

What auditing and reporting frameworks govern Freeport expenditure and incentives, and why are these not aligned with the transparency standards applied to local authorities?

How does the Freeport ensure democratic accountability for decisions that materially affect local communities, given that Freeport boards are not elected bodies?

Given Freeports operate with unique tax and regulatory flexibilities, what specific governance processes ensure decisions taken by the Board are subject to independent review, and why are these not routinely published?

Response

The Freeport does not own land or determine planning applications. Development proposals continue to be decided by the relevant planning authority under the same planning and environmental framework that applies elsewhere. East Midlands Freeport's (EMF) role is to support investment that aligns with its objectives and to help coordinate enabling infrastructure, skills and wider economic benefits.

Each planning application will need to provide the relevant land-use and environmental evidence through the planning process. The planning authority is responsible for approving and monitoring the biodiversity requirements, and the relevant planning documents and decisions provide the public record.

On infrastructure, Junction 24 of the M1 and the surrounding transport network remain a major constraint. Technical work, modelling and option development are under way. Our current assumption is to identify a preferred scheme during 2027; subsequent delivery will depend on agreement, approvals and funding.

The transport programme's scope is broader than the motorway junction and is considering local roads, freight and employee movements, public transport and active travel. Linked to this is something called the Supplementary Planning Document: at the Freeport's request the three local planning authorities have adopted this policy which sets out how developers will pay their fair share to help fund the roads, transport improvements and other strategic infrastructure that is needed.

To deliver this, EMF is leading development of a comprehensive and fully costed solution, with technical work, modelling and early design underway. We set aside funding to take the scheme through to the consenting stage and are in close partnership with National Highways and other Highway Authorities.

Firstly, the project will map the current and expected capacity for the Junction and surrounding area to make sure that our scheme provides the necessary infrastructure. Our planning will also look at public transport and active travel options.

We have been speaking to the Government about the best way to access funding. And the solution is a mixture of approaches which significantly reduce the ask of central Government.

The investments supported to date are at East Midlands Gateway and are reported as representing more than 850 jobs and around £150 million of investment across Maritime Transport, CEVA Logistics, and Maersk. These are early results and do not demonstrate the full range of high-skilled engineering and manufacturing jobs we aim to create.

Our investment focus is on advanced logistics, aerospace, automotive and clean energy, with an emphasis on additional investment, productivity, skills and good-quality jobs.

Applicants for locally administered business-rates relief must meet the Freeport's assessment criteria. We will publish details of successful applications in line with our transparency commitments, subject to lawful protection of commercially sensitive and personal information.

The Freeport is a public-private partnership, but decisions on public money are reserved to public-sector directors. Our Accountable Body, East Midlands Combined County Authority, provides oversight of the proper use of public funding, alongside Government assurance and monitoring requirements.

The Board includes elected local-authority representatives as well as private-sector partners. Planning decisions will remain with elected local planning authorities, while other statutory matters remain with the relevant public bodies. Board agendas, minutes, governance documents, and key strategies are published in line with our Transparency Policy, with limited exceptions for legal, personal or commercial confidentiality.

The Government's UK Freeports programme also includes monitoring, evaluation and assurance arrangements. We recognise the public interest in independent scrutiny and will continue to publish information about our governance and performance where we can, while protecting information that cannot lawfully or responsibly be disclosed.

Questions

Has an assessment of the impact on the neighbouring communities of the travel of the EMIP workforce been carried out?

1. If it has then when can we have access to it to review it?
2. If not then will it be done and consulted on in time for the required mitigation actions to be carried out prior to the development and activation of the site?

The assessment should enable the impact of a Swarkestone Bridge Bypass (directly linked to the A50) in relieving the effect the EMIP workforce traffic would otherwise have on our communities.

Response

We agree that workforce movements and effects on neighbouring communities need to be understood before development becomes operational.

East Midlands Freeport (EMF) does not currently hold a completed, standalone assessment of the impact on the neighbouring communities of the travel of the East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) workforce. However, this will be considered as part of any planning process, which will require the completion of a full Transport Assessment including analysis of the effects of the development and details of any recommended mitigation measures. The Transport Assessment will be consulted on as part of that process.

Any proposal for a Swarkestone Bridge bypass would need to be assessed by the relevant highway and planning authorities against the evidence, costs, impacts and available funding. EMF can help ensure that the issue is shared with those partners, but cannot commit to a particular scheme or outcome at this stage.

We will continue to talk to communities around EMIP and our other sites to ensure we better understand local and specific issues like this one.

Question

I have the following question for the Board - specifically the representatives present from the Accountable Body (EMCCA).

Protect Diseworth has sought to meet with Claire Ward on a number of occasions and received the following responses:

"I'm afraid it would be inappropriate for me to visit with a view to influencing a planning decision held by a planning authority that sits outside the East Midlands Combined County

Authority area. Accountable Body status – once conferred – will relate to EMCCA's accountability for the proper use of government money, and does not give EMCCA (or by extension, the Mayor) any planning powers that extend beyond its boundaries. North West Leicestershire District Council would – rightly – consider this to be an overreach on my part, and it is important for me to maintain a constructive relationship with them."

- Claire Spencer - Mayoral Chief of Staff 22/9/25

"Mayor Claire is not the Mayor for Leicestershire, and she cannot undermine local leadership without actively harming a relationship that is necessary to the people of the EMCCA area.

Redirecting your request via the board would allow for this to be discussed and responded to without creating this conflict – so please reconsider this as a way forward."

- Claire Spencer 4/10/25

If that is Claire Ward's position, and she has stated that it would be an overreach on her part to get involved with a planning process in Leicestershire, why did she then make herself personally the top billing in the recent EMF Unlocking the Gateway Report (10/03/26) and gave her full support to the report which went on to say:

"This proposal is the product of several years of detailed joint working with EMCCA, National Highways, local highway authorities, Midlands Connect and our private sector partners. If Junction 24 is not upgraded: Up to 500,000 square metres of development and 28,000 jobs at East Midlands Gateway Phase Two cannot proceed".

It is impossible for Claire Ward to maintain both of these positions at the same time.

Why does she continue to refuse to engage with Protect Diseworth and other local groups?

Response

The mayor's decisions about individual meetings and engagement are matters for the Mayor and East Midlands Combined County Authority, so it would not be appropriate for East Midlands Freeport to answer on her behalf.

Question

How will the Freeport ensure that developments don't become hubs for low-wage, insecure logistics work instead of the clean-energy and advanced manufacturing jobs promised?

Additionally, which high value manufacturing companies have agreed to occupying manufacturing space in the Freeport? If you can't name them, then please state how many new businesses and new jobs (not redeployed businesses or jobs)?

With reference to the Freeport funded SPD which spans 3 different local councils. Why was the public consultation period only 5 weeks long for a multi-million pound strategic development, which will permanently alter the landscape?

Who chooses which questions to answer at the public meeting and which ones will receive an email reply? What criteria will be used and how will the Freeport show transparency? For example, will number of questions be made public?

Response

The investments supported to date at East Midlands Gateway are reported as representing more than 850 jobs and around £150 million of investment across Maritime Transport, CEVA Logistics, and Maersk. We recognise that this is an early picture.

Our investment focus remains advanced logistics, aerospace, automotive and clean energy. We are working closely with international manufacturing opportunities as well as incumbents like Toyota, who signed an MoU with the Freeport to explore opportunities at our East Midlands Intermodal Park back in 2025. Applications for locally administered business-rates relief must meet assessment criteria, and our wider work on skills and communities is intended to help local people access jobs as occupiers come forward. The Freeport cannot prescribe an employer's pay and contract model, but we can ask developers to prioritise additional investment, productivity, skills and good-quality employment.

The Supplementary Planning Document was prepared and consulted on by the three local planning authorities, which were responsible for setting the consultation arrangements, in line with regulations regarding consultation timescales and ensuring that the process met the applicable planning requirements. It was subsequently adopted by all three councils.

Responses received helped inform the final document. Work is now under way on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will provide further detail on infrastructure requirements, delivery priorities, costs and indicative timescales and will be subject to consultation before adoption.

Due to the number of questions we received, the Chair grouped similar questions into five themes so that the meeting could cover the widest possible range of issues within the time available: jobs and economic impact; employment rights; infrastructure; planning, environment and land; and governance.

Every question submitted has received a written response, whether or not it was discussed at the meeting, and the questions and responses have been published on our website.

Question

The majority of residents do not want anymore warehouses, they don't want more agricultural land covered an enormous grey buildings that do nothing for landscape and the communities that live next to them. Agricultural land is needed for UK for food, and part of the Brexit plan was to grow our own food.

This isn't positive change, it's not what people want. I believe the economy is thriving here already, with many industrial areas already built. It would make the community feel more positive about the future if you didn't build them. It's a majority view that will not change, as once the countryside is covered in warehousing it can never be restored.

My question is, with the above being a true reflection of how communities feel, how can you claim to bring positive change to the area?

Response

East Midlands Freeport (EMF) is a long-term project aimed at boosting growth by attracting private sector investment in the three Freeport Tax Sites and investing retained business rates in economic development activity within the wider freeport area.

The East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) 2 site forms the most substantial part of the overall EMAGIC tax site. Given its position and proximity to major road, rail and air connections, it presents a unique opportunity as a low carbon freight and manufacturing hub, supporting growth sectors as well as the transition to net zero. The world-class multimodal transport connectivity of EMAGIC makes this location particularly attractive as it ensures that businesses can access domestic and global markets efficiently.

As set out in our Financial Business Case, we are working towards achieving the following key objectives in support of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy:

- Driving significant and transformative economic regeneration across the East Midlands;
- Supporting target sectors including green energy generation, low-carbon freight, advanced manufacturing and logistics which meet our gateway tests for business rates relief, including demonstrating "additionality" to the regional and UK economy;
- Boosting employment and skills;
- Delivering the design and construction of transport and highway infrastructure that will form part of wider solutions to highway and transport movements around Jn 24 M1.

The Freeport will work with applicants, the local planning authority and local communities to ensure that developments that are brought forwards are as appropriate and sensitive to the communities most directly impacted by development.

We recognise the strength of feeling about the loss of countryside, agricultural land and the scale and appearance of new development. Positive change cannot be judged by investment figures alone; it must also be reflected in local jobs and skills, infrastructure, environmental safeguards and how impacts on nearby communities are addressed.

The Freeport does not own land or determine planning applications. Proposals that developers bring forward must be considered by the relevant planning authority under the planning and environmental framework, including evidence on need, alternatives, agricultural land, landscape, transport and biodiversity.

Question

Please could you explain how and why land was designated as Freeport without public consultation, and the inclusion of BMV land made available for development, contrary to the government's Land Use Framework directive and increasing concerns around national food security?

Response

The Freeport went through a detailed Government-led approval process, from the national Freeports consultation and competitive bidding process through to business-case approval and tax-site designation.

Between February and July 2020, the UK Government consulted publicly on the overall Freeports policy. It then invited areas in England to bid for Freeport status in November 2020, with partners from local government, industry and academia coming together to shape the East Midlands bid.

As part of developing and securing approval for the bid, the Freeport Board agreed, following Government feedback, to expand the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) tax-site boundary to include land south of the airport and the A453, known as EMAGIC 2.

The Government's process did not require a separate local public consultation on the proposed tax-site boundary. Tax-site designation created a defined area in which qualifying businesses may access specified tax reliefs; it did not grant planning permission, allocate the land for development or make development inevitable.

Any development proposal must still be considered by the relevant planning authority. This includes evidence on the quality and use of the land, the need for development, reasonable alternatives and effects on food production, landscape, transport and biodiversity. Communities can make representations through that planning process.

The Government's Land Use Framework was published after the Freeport tax sites were designated. It is an important current policy framework for balancing food production, nature, infrastructure and economic development, but it does not replace the planning system. The planning authority will need to consider the applicable policy and evidence when determining any future application.

We have set out the timeline of the bidding and designation process for the Freeport on our website.

Questions

One of your employees recently claimed that the record 12.5% increase in freight traffic at East Midlands for the year 2025/6 demonstrates that the Freeport is "...anchored around a growing trade and logistics asset....".

As no differentiation between imports and exports is offered in this statistic how does it have any bearing on the Freeport creation of high skilled jobs, etc, especially as most of the export tonnage is overspill from Heathrow and most of the import tonnage is from the Far East and China?

None of the three East Midlands Freeport sites have yet seen a spade in the ground, never mind become operational. In the meantime, East Midlands Airport has achieved a record 12.5% growth in freight traffic over the last twelve months, with no input from the Freeport and little or no adverse impact on local infrastructure. Does this not demonstrate that the entire Freeport project is irrelevant, expensive, unnecessary and destructive?

Response

Growth in freight at East Midlands Airport is positive evidence of demand for the region's business and trade. The airport also represents an important and distinctive attraction to global investors.

The case for the Freeport is broader: it is intended to use defined tax sites, infrastructure coordination, skills activity and targeted investment support to attract additional business and develop clusters in priority sectors. There is already visible progress on the ground.

As part of a £150million investment, creating more than 850 jobs, two plots at SEGRO's Logistics Park East Midlands Gateway have been developed and leased to occupiers, and the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, operated by Maritime Transport, has doubled its capacity and built a four storey office with welfare and training facilities. Further sites are being prepared, planning is being secured, and investors are being actively engaged.

The other sites are long-term and complex propositions, so progress will not always be visible as construction. Planning, infrastructure, utilities, remediation and investor decisions must be worked through before development can begin.

The airport's recent freight performance demonstrates that the region already has a strong asset on which to build. The Freeport will ultimately need to demonstrate that its interventions have generated additional investment, good-quality jobs and benefits to local people.

That East Midlands Airport has achieved a record 12.5% growth in freight traffic over the last twelve months, is testament to the operation that they run there and why it is the UK's foremost express air freight hub.

Question

Given that there is already in excess of 1 million square feet of warehouse/factory premises currently under construction and advertised available to let, within 1 mile of the proposed development site, which is currently active productive agricultural land, what is the justification for ripping up and covering the agricultural land rather than occupying the similar developments now and imminently available?

Response

East Midlands Freeport (EMF) is a long-term project aimed at boosting growth by attracting private sector investment in the three Freeport Tax Sites and investing retained business rates in economic development activity within the wider freeport area.

The East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) 2 site forms the most substantial part of the overall EMAGIC tax site. Given its position and proximity to major road, rail and air connections, it presents a unique opportunity as a low carbon freight and manufacturing hub, supporting growth sectors as well as the transition to net zero. The world-class multimodal transport connectivity of EMAGIC makes this location particularly attractive as it ensures that businesses can access domestic and global markets efficiently.

As set out in our Financial Business Case, we are working towards achieving the following key objectives in support of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy:

- Driving significant and transformative economic regeneration across the East Midlands;
- Supporting target sectors including green energy generation, low-carbon freight, advanced manufacturing and logistics which meet our gateway tests for business rates relief, including demonstrating "additionality" to the regional and UK economy;
- Boosting employment and skills;
- Delivering the design and construction of transport and highway infrastructure that will form part of wider solutions to highway and transport movements around Jn 24 M1.

The Freeport will work with applicants, the local planning authority and local communities to ensure that developments that are brought forwards are as appropriate and sensitive to the communities most directly impacted by development.

The Freeport does not own the land or determine planning applications. The justification for developing land must be made by the applicant and tested by the relevant planning authority.

That assessment should consider the amount, type, location and availability of existing and planned floorspace; whether it can meet the identified demand; the need for additional development; reasonable alternatives; and the loss of agricultural land. The existence of nearby space is therefore relevant evidence, but does not by itself establish whether it is suitable or available for the same occupiers or uses.

EMF will support proposals only where they align with our objectives, but we do not give automatic support simply because land lies within a tax site. Communities can submit

evidence and concerns through the planning process, and the planning authority can refuse permission or require mitigation where the proposal is not justified or its impacts are unacceptable.

Question

How does East Midlands Freeport justify the proposed development of approximately 250 acres of arable farmland for large-scale warehouse construction, including buildings of up to seven storeys in height, located around 200 metres from residential properties in Diseworth.

Diseworth is an historic village with a heritage dating back more than 800 years, situated within a conservation area and containing numerous Grade I and Grade II listed buildings. What assessment has the Freeport made of the long-term impact of this development on the village's character, heritage assets, residents' quality of life, and the surrounding environment, and why does the Board believe these impacts are outweighed by the benefits of the scheme?

Response

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The Freeport will work with applicants, the local planning authority and local communities to ensure that developments that are brought forwards are as appropriate and sensitive to the communities most directly impacted by development.

The Freeport does not own the land, promote the planning application or determine whether the proposal should proceed. The applicant must justify the scale, height, location and use of the development, including its proximity to homes, and the relevant planning authority must test that case through the planning process.

The planning process will consider evidence on landscape and visual effects, heritage significance and setting, traffic and noise, air quality, lighting, ecology and biodiversity,

drainage, construction impacts and residents' amenity and quality of life. This may include the potential long-term and cumulative effects on Diseworth Conservation Area and its listed buildings, together with any proposed avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

EMF will support proposals only where they align with our objectives, but we do not give automatic support simply because land lies within a tax site.

Questions

The village of Diseworth immediately abuts your "E Magic 2" site, a site designated without any prior public notice in February 2022. As a result, it faces the prospect of 24 hr operational massive industrial sheds less than 250m from it.

Despite a request directly to your Chair and numerous FOI Requests made to you, LCC and NWLDC (both partners in your project,) MHCLG and its predecessor DLUHC, Diseworth has been kept in the dark as to the detail of, and the factors considered in, that process. What little information has been released has largely been due to forced disclosure after complaint to the Information Commissioner.

As you now claim to operate a policy of transparency, as well as being responsive to community concerns, will you finally make full disclosure of the evidence we have sought about a decision made over 4 years ago? If not, why not?

In an internal email of 24th of February 2022 to council officers advising them of the tax site designation, the then chief executive of NWLDC (one of your partners) said;

*"Government have confirmed the EMAGIC site as a tax site - confidential at the moment **but a done deal**"* (my emphasis.)

Despite the competing applications currently being made by Prologis and SEGRO over the site, do you consider the process to be a "done deal" with development of the site an inevitability? A reasoned reply would be appreciated.

If your answer to the above is in the negative, why do you make no reference to the planning situation on your website in promoting the benefits of the site to potential developers/occupiers?

Response

We have responded to information requests made to East Midlands Freeport (EMF) in line with our Transparency Policy, including publishing a clear timeline of how the Freeport was designated by Government. Decisions made by our partner organisations or the Government about what information they decide to release is a matter for them.

EMF is a long-term project aimed at boosting growth by attracting private sector investment in the three Freeport Tax Sites and investing retained business rates in economic development activity within the wider freeport area.

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- Delivering the design and construction of transport and highway infrastructure that will form part of wider solutions to highway and transport movements around Jn 24 M1.

The Freeport will work with applicants, the local planning authority and local communities to ensure that developments that are brought forwards are as appropriate and sensitive to the communities most directly impacted by development.

Tax site designation did not grant planning permission and did not make development inevitable. The Freeport does not own the land or determine the planning proposals. Each application must be considered on its merits by the relevant planning authority under the applicable planning and environmental framework.

EMF may promote the strategic investment opportunity presented by a tax site, but that should not be read as a statement that a particular scheme has planning approval.

Question

We would like to know how the developers intend to manage the increase in traffic? At peak times the local villages are gridlocked.

Response

We recognise the concern about existing congestion in local villages, particularly at peak times. Each developer will need to assess the additional traffic generated by its proposal and set out how it will be managed through the planning process.

That evidence should consider effects on the motorway and main-road network as well as routes through surrounding villages. Depending on the findings, mitigation could include highway improvements, junction changes, routing and delivery-management measures, public transport, active travel and workplace travel plans. The relevant planning and highway authorities will decide what measures are necessary and how they should be secured.

Alongside these site-specific responsibilities, EMF is progressing wider work on Junction 24 and the surrounding corridor. Technical work, modelling and early design are under way to understand current and forecast movements and develop potential interventions. This work includes local road connectivity and resilience, freight and employee travel, public transport, walking and cycling.

Our current programme assumption is to identify a preferred scheme during 2027. Subsequent delivery will depend on agreement, statutory approvals and a confirmed funding package. Linked to this is something called the Supplementary Planning Document: at the Freeport's request the three local planning authorities have adopted this policy which sets out how developers will pay their fair share to help fund the roads, transport improvements and other strategic infrastructure that is needed.