

Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board held on 15 June 2023 at County Hall, Glenfield.

PRESENT

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

Phil Canning – Uniper
Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport
Chris Lewis – Maritime Transport
Andrew Pilsworth - SEGRO
Peter Ralston – Goodman
Julie Rossiter – Etwall Land Limited

Local Authorities

Mr Lee Breckon CC – Leicestershire County Council
Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council
Councillor Keith Girling – Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Keith Merrie – North West Leicestershire District Council
Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council

Accountable Body Officers

John Sinnott – Chief Executive
Nick Wash – Head of Service, Finance
Gemma Duckworth – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance

DLUHC Official
Richard Hiscoke – Bevan Brittan
Katie Greenhalgh - East Midlands Freeport (for item 6)
Justin Ives – South Derbyshire District Council (for item 9)
Katie Pegg – Leicestershire County Council (for item 10)
Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive, East Midlands Freeport

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barry Lewis and Frank Robotham.

1.	<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.	
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2.	<p><u>Minutes.</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 May 2023 were presented. Goodmans had some amendments to the TSO item, which would be sent for inclusion. It was noted that the Board was not quorate at the last meeting and no decisions had been taken. Once amended, the minutes would be recirculated.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Action Log.</u></p> <p>The Board considered the log of completed and outstanding actions.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Chair's Update.</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed new members to the Board.</p> <p>The Chair provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UKREiiF conference had recently taken place, where there had been an opportunity to raise the profile of the EMF with inward investors. • The need to get the EMF company formed as soon as possible was stressed. • The Chair reiterated the intention to have as many sites as possible operational within the 2026 timeframe. • A number of briefings with MPs was being arranged. • Meetings with Pauline Latham MP and Ben Bradley MP had taken place to discuss SmartParc/Investment Zones. • Quarterly meetings of the Freeport Chairs were due to be held, with the first in the coming weeks. 	
5.	<p><u>CEO Update.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEO reported that he had attended the recent Midlands Economic Summit, which had been a good opportunity to showcase to the wider Midlands community. • Two DLUHC Ministers, Dehanna Davison MP and Rachel Maclean MP had visited the region. A meeting had been held at Uniper's site to discuss the Government's regional policy initiative and how they might align. • Discussions had been taking place with Midlands Connect. A task and finish group was being established to create a collective overview of the 	

	<p>economic opportunities in the region and to consider the transport implications relating to these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting had been held with the Qatar Freezone Authority to discuss opportunities for partnership working. • A meeting of Freeport Chief Executives was due to take place with Ministers from the Department for Business and Trade and Department for Levelling Up to discuss how to attract inward investment. • In response to a query around EMF and investment zones, it was noted that there was a requirement for alignment where there was an overlap in geographies/sectors. 	
6.	<p><u>Seed Capital Update.</u></p> <p>An update was provided on the seed capital funding refresh exercise, where the Sites and Infrastructure Committee had met to review the longlist and agree on the criteria for shortlisting.</p> <p>A number of new projects were emerging, including around renewable/low carbon energy production and associated freight decarbonisation.</p> <p>The current list would be refined to a shortlist and the recommended projects would be presented to the next meeting of the Board. It was suggested that a set of evaluation criteria be circulated to the EMF members in advance of the shortlist being produced.</p> <p>In response to a query around why there was a sole focus on Junction 24 of the M1 for infrastructure, it was noted that Midlands Connect was taking the lead around the wider transport and infrastructure challenges and Junction 24 was an obvious pinchpoint – but this work was taking a broader view. There would be close collaboration on how best to develop the various infrastructure projects and to influence National Highways. It was essential that there was a joint approach to any project, and work was already taking place with partners to create a future framework for National Highways to consider. Affordability, however, would be the key issue and discussions with National Highways on their recent visit to EMF had been helpful but frank.</p>	KG

	<p>It was suggested that the cross-cutting projects be considered in more detail, to determine whether elements could be funded from elsewhere. It was possible that if seed capital was not provided, some projects might be funded through retained business rates further down the line.</p> <p>A recommendation was also made to over-programme the shortlist, recognising that various schemes were still at an early stage of development.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Governance Update.</u></p> <p>The Board was informed that there were now no substantive issues relating to the Articles of Association/Members Agreement.</p> <p>The Board AGREED that the full suite of governance documents would be signed in September, following internal approvals of all members.</p> <p>It was possible that a meeting of the Governance Group would need to be convened to resolve any outstanding issues.</p> <p>Organisations would need to ensure the documents were approved through their own governance arrangements, and were asked to confirm whether this could be achieved by the end of September.</p> <p>It was agreed that the finalised documents, including those for signing, would be uploaded to the Sharepoint site.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>Cat Rogers</p>
8.	<p><u>Subsidy Control – Progress Update.</u></p> <p>The Board was provided with an update from the billing authorities as to the current position with subsidy control.</p> <p>A further update would be provided to the next meeting of the Board.</p>	<p>RH/billing authorities</p>
9.	<p><u>EMF Business Planning and Financials.</u></p> <p>The budget had been discussed at the last meeting of the Board, with a number of issues arising from this. Due to the potential cash flow issue that the EMF would be facing in the immediate future, the accountable body</p>	

	<p>had agreed to extend the loan facility to the EMF, under agreement with the EMF Chair. Once the retained business rates began to step up from 2024/25, EMF would no longer have the cashflow issue and it would be possible to begin repaying the loan.</p> <p>The budget for this financial year was presented to the Board. It was suggested that further consideration needed to be given to member contributions, in particular where a charge could be given for a specific service.</p> <p>Members AGREED that EMF could work up business cases for specific work relating to CSR/community engagement/skills, and private sector members would be willing to consider opportunities to contribute on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Members AGREED the 2023/24 budget which was presented, along with the business plan framework underpinning this.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Comms and Marketing.</u></p> <p>Work was taking place with partner comms leads to build a deliverable strategy, as part of the Comms and Marketing Subcommittee. There would be a phased approach, but key was ‘humanising’ the Freeport to local communities.</p> <p>Significant progress had been made over the last few months, and a number of next steps were highlighted, including the development of a transparency pledge (which had been circulated to the Board), a brand and marketing refresh, PR opportunities and community engagement. In terms of the formal launch event, it was the intention to invite a senior member of Government, along with an exhibition for local communities. However, it would not be possible to invite a senior Minister to consider attending a formal launch until the company had been fully incorporated.</p> <p>Consideration was being given to what Member organisations were already doing around community engagement, and it was agreed that it would be helpful to create a dashboard of events so that relevant partners could be invited. Partners were asked to feed any information to Kate Pegg.</p>	ALL

	<p>A number of recommendations had been included in the report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement to publish a 'pledge' on the EMF website and to stand up comms to publicise this as part of the autumn launch • A commitment to feed into the audit of stakeholders and channels • Agreement to step up community engagement, in line with existing member activities, and focussed on particular areas (for example, Diseworth). <p>Members AGEED the above recommendations and that any media enquiries relating to the Freeport, or requests to use Freeport branding, should be flagged with Katie Pegg for comment.</p>	
11.	<p><u>HR Policies.</u></p> <p>Now that the Executive Delivery Team was operational, it was necessary for the EMF to meet statutory duties as an employer. A range of HR policies had been created for this purpose.</p> <p>Members AGREED the contents of the documents.</p>	
12.	<p><u>DLUHC Update.</u></p> <p>The following update was provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billing authorities were being contacted to report how they had found the NNDR process. • Discussions had taken place with the Valuations Office regarding sites, and no concerns had been raised. It was the intention to speed up this process. • It was the aim for incorporation to occur before/ alongside sign off of the Memorandum of Understanding. • A meeting was planned for 27 June which was a quarterly event with Ministers and Freeport representatives. • The recent meeting at Uniper had been very positive and had been an opportunity for the Minister to speak to some EMF partners. <p>A query was raised around whether any funding would be available for large infrastructure improvements (road</p>	

	and rail), as these would not be achieved locally. It was reported that the Minister was fully aware of the issues regionally and that any funding would need to be considered alongside other transport priorities. Further consideration was being given by DLUHC about how to assist Freeports in playing in to the wider funding discussions.	
13.	<p><u>MAG Update on East Midlands Airport Sites.</u></p> <p>The Board received a presentation on the Masterplan for East Midlands Airport. Detailed work was already underway which formed part of a 25 year plan. It was noted that there were a number of development opportunities for the tax sites at East Midlands Airport and also for areas which did not fall within the tax site boundaries.</p>	
14.	<p><u>Any Other Business.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board meeting currently scheduled for 7 September would be delayed to allow partners time to take the necessary governance documentation through their own internal processes. • A DLUHC site visit was being arranged. The Chief Executive would contact members who would be involved. 	<p>TN-T/GD</p> <p>TN-T</p>
15.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting.</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the Board would take place on 20 July 2023 at 2.00 – 4.30pm at a venue to be confirmed.</p>	

2.00 – 4.10pm

15 June 2023

Chairman