

Minutes of a meeting of the East Midlands Freeport Board held on 24 January 2025 at  
Rushcliffe Borough Council, Rushcliffe Arena, at 11am.

PRESENT

Nora Senior – Independent Chair

Landowners/Developers

David Bee – Uniper

Steve Griffiths – East Midlands Airport (EMA)

Chris Lewis – Maritime Transport

Andrew Pilsworth – SEGRO

Peter Ralston – Goodman (Via Microsoft Teams)

Frank Robotham – Maritime Transport

Julie Rossiter – Etwall Land Limited

Local Authorities

James Arnold – North West Leicestershire District Council (Via Microsoft Teams)

Joe Battye - Derbyshire County Council (Via Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council

Councillor Keith Girling – Nottinghamshire County Council

Derek Higton – Nottinghamshire County Council

Dr Justin Ives – South Derbyshire District Council (Via Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Tony King – Derbyshire County Council

Peter Linfield – Rushcliffe Borough Council

Councillor Stephen Taylor – South Derbyshire District Council

Allison Thomas – North West Leicestershire District Council (Via Microsoft Teams)

Councillor Andrew Woodman – North West Leicestershire District Council (Via Microsoft Teams)

Accountable Body Officers

John Sinnott – Chief Executive

Nick Wash – Head of Finance

Executive Delivery Team

Nadia Ansari – Senior Project Officer

Dan Cooper – Head of Communications and Marketing

Stacy Ford – Communications and Marketing Manager

Naomi Kwasa – Governance and Committees Lead

Tom Newman-Taylor – Chief Executive

Also in Attendance

Richard Hiscoke – Bevan Brittan for Item 8: Governance Update (Via Microsoft Teams)

MHCLG Official (Via Microsoft Teams)

1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Phil Canning, who was represented by David Bee, Cllr Keith Merrie, who was represented by Cllr Andrew Woodman, and Mr Breckon who was represented by John Sinnott. Apologies were also received from Lauren Haslam and Richard Grice.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest.</u></p> <p>The Chair invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda. No declarations were made.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Minutes.</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Action Log.</u></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> that actions from its previous meeting(s) had been completed, overtaken or were on the agenda. The Board <b>NOTED</b> the list of outstanding and completed actions since the last meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Chair's Update.</u></p> <p>The Chair provided an update to the Board. She noted that there has been positive news since the last Board meeting regarding inward investment. She noted that the prospective investor gave a strong endorsement of EMF and the work of the Delivery Team.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that TSOs will be providing updates to the Board, but that SEGRO and MAG (with their third-party developer) are each progressing their own plans for EMG2. She stated that everyone is committed to realising the development of the full site.</p> <p>Regarding the Government's potential Freeport Policy moment which was initially proposed last year, the Chair noted discussions were going and it was expected that there are three areas of focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alignment with the Industrial Strategy</li> <li>2. The introduction of a workers' charter</li> <li>3. Regional alignment</li> </ol> <p>The Board encouraged the EMF Team and Chair to continue to work closely with Government on their proposals to ensure a level playing field and that the inward investment proposition is not diminished within Freeports, and it was noted that support from private sector partners in engaging with Government would be useful. It was <b>AGREED</b> that a letter</p>	DC

	<p>from EMF partners to the Government (coordinated by EMF) would be helpful in expressing the Board's position.</p> <p>Regarding seed capital, the Chair confirmed that a report on this would not be discussed at this meeting as it has been postponed to the February Board, to allow further time to engage with bidders.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Chief Executive's Update.</u></b></p> <p>The CEO directed the Board to the written update provided in the agenda pack. He noted that EMF is feeding into a piece of work by the Government's Office for Investment on borrowing against retained business rates and have offered up some case studies to help shape the process. He confirmed that in developing the EMF Business Plan 2024/25 there is a recognition that the focus needs to be on getting the tax sites unlocked and investor ready, as well as the need to ensure EMF's role and responsibilities are clear within the wider eco-system.</p> <p>He noted that EMF have now responded to a complaint from Project Diseworth. He thanked MAG and Segro colleagues for feeding into the process.</p> <p>He noted that he has been working with EMCCA to help shape the Local Growth Plan and he and EMF Chair had met with Andy Haldane as the head of EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Commission to ensure the Freeport is properly represented within these plans. He confirmed there are good working relationships across EMCCA and the Freeport team who are feeding into discussions on skills, energy, and inward investment, and the response from EMCCA is one of positivity and support for the Freeport.</p> <p>He also noted that EMF, EMCCA and LCC are working closely together via the Collaboration Forum and that there is a recognition and willingness on both sides to work across political and geographical boundaries.</p> <p>LCC Chief Executive commented that although LCC and EMCCA have had conversations regarding devolution and EMF, neither have been approached by MHCLG on what changes will be required. The Chair requested some transparency from MHCLG and access to Government thinking regarding this and the CEO requested the process is not protracted – the focus needs to remain on timely delivery of our shared objectives. MHCLG official noted this.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>ISO Update</u></b></p> <p>The Chair invited the TSO members to give brief updates on their sites.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Governance Update</u></b></p>	

<p>The Chair introduced the report which confirmed all substantive issues in relation to the governance documents have now been resolved, and a final review to make stylistic improvements has concluded. Therefore, the documents will be ready to circulate for engrossment on 31 January 2025 and the EMF Team will proceed to implement the subcommittee structure, following feedback from Board on the subcommittee draft Terms of Reference.</p> <p>EMF CEO noted that a meeting had taken place with members' legal leads and there had been no further substantial changes following this.</p> <p>The Board raised questions on the potential publication of the Members Agreement and the Chair confirmed this would be considered within Item 10: Transparency Policy.</p> <p>Regarding subcommittee arrangements, EMF CEO noted that changes to subcommittees have not yet been implemented whilst governance has been progressing, and they could now be established. Board had the opportunity to comment on the circulated Subcommittee Terms of Reference and it was confirmed that these would be formally ratified at the meeting in February and any comments would be circulated beforehand.</p> <p>The Board discussed the recommendation to move to bi-monthly meetings and it was felt more appropriate that this be re-considered once the subcommittees have been established and County elections have taken place in May 2025. Clarification was sought on the membership of subcommittees and EMF CEO confirmed that individuals had been approached to chair the subcommittees and that these, and their membership, would be agreed at the next meeting.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> that the indicative calendar of meetings would be recirculated to Board members.</p> <p>The Board noted that now governance has been agreed the process for assessing TSIGR applications would commence using the final TSIGR application form consistent with the subsidy scheme and confirmed by the Billing Authorities to be consistent with their policy.</p> <p>Following the discussion the Board <b>AGREED</b>;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>To the signing process of the final governance documents as proposed in Appendix A.</b></li> <li>2. <b>They had reviewed and provided feedback on the draft Subcommittee Terms of Reference, including proposed membership and Chairs. Final versions would be shared for approval in February.</b></li> <li>3. <b>To establish the subcommittees as noted and that monthly Board meetings would continue until reviewed after local elections in May 2025.</b></li> </ol>	<p>NK</p>
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	<p>4. That EMF now begin processing applications for business rates relief to share with Public Sector Directors and then the relevant Billing Authority Member as soon as they are appointed formally.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b><u>MHCLG Annual Performance Review</u></b></p> <p>EMF CEO introduced the report which set out actions following the APR at the start of 2024. He noted that the recommendations were broadly accepted and that most were already underway or had been completed. There was a discussion about EMF's role around security, recognising EMF and its partner organisations limited remit in this space.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the next Annual Performance Review is scheduled for March 2025. Following the discussion, it was <b>AGREED</b> that the Board;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviewed the actions set by MHCLG;</li> <li>2. Approved the analysis and next steps in response;</li> <li>3. Scrutinised and provided feedback on EMF progress in meeting those actions.</li> </ol> <p>The Board took a short break at 12.22pm.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><b><u>EMF Transparency Policy</u></b></p> <p>The meeting resumed at 12.41pm. The Communications and Marketing Manager introduced the report which asked the Board to consider EMF's commitment to transparency through determining a scheme of documents to be published. She noted that EMF are working in a unique environment as a private company allocating public funds and therefore it is important to align with public sector standards of transparency where appropriate. She noted this does not mean compromising commercial or sensitive information, rather it is about being proactive and taking control of the information and narrative around EMF, and that nothing would be published without the agreement of relevant partners.</p> <p>EMF CEO reminded Board that, although EMF is not subject to FOI legislation, public sector partners and central government are, and therefore it is pragmatic for EMF to be proactively transparent in what it publishes.</p> <p>Following the discussion, it was <b>AGREED</b> that Board;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approved the draft Transparency Policy to be published on the EMF website. (Annex A)</li> <li>2. Discussed additional measures and provided steer on publication. (Annex B)</li> <li>3. Noted draft website content framing the Transparency Policy for public audiences. (Annex C)</li> </ol>	

	4. Noted the communications plan for publication of transparency policy. (Annex D)	
11.	<p><b><u>Remuneration &amp; People Committee Update</u></b></p> <p>The Chair and all members of the EMF Delivery Team except the CEO, left the room.</p> <p>The Chair of the Remuneration &amp; People Committee introduced the report and referred the Board to the minutes of the Committee held on 10 January 2025, which had been circulated. He recommended that Board ratify the decisions endorsed by the Committee and the recommendations were <b>APPROVED</b>.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>The Chair and EMF Delivery Team returned to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair informed the Board that the Delivery Team are looking to include a section with Director profiles on the new EMF website and therefore there will be a professional photographer in attendance to take photos of all Directors before the next Board meeting.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Ordinary meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on 26 February 2025 at 1pm at North West Leicestershire District Council.</p>	

11am – 1.28pm, 24 January 2025

Chair: Nora Senior