

Freeport Board

Venue: Teesworks Skills Academy, Eston Road, TS6 6UA

Date: Monday, 14 October 2024 at 11.00am

(These Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next Freeport Board and are therefore subject to amendments)

Members Present:		Member Apologies:	
Julie Gilhespie (JG)	Operator Representative of Custom Zones and Tax Sites	Ben Houchen	Tees Valley Mayor
Matthew Ord (Vice Chair) (MO)	Tees Valley Business Board	Bill Scott	Port Clarence
Councillor Alec Brown (AB)	Leader of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	David Smith	STDC Board Member
Ian Kirk (IK)	Teesworks	Shaun Casey	Redcar Bulk Terminal
Andrew Cottrell (AC)	Sembcorp		
Lance Taylor (LT)	Able Seaton Port		
Jerry Hopkinson (JH)	PD Ports		
Gary Dawson (GD)	AV Dawson		

Non-Members Present:			
Gary Macdonald (GM)	Group Director of Finance and Resources	Emma Simson (ES)	Group Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer, TVCA
Siobhan McArdle (SM)	Freeport Programme Director	Connor Malone (CM)	TVCA Governance, Minutes
John Coxon (JC)	DLUHC (Observer)		

No.	Agenda Item	Summary of Discussion	Actions	Responsibility
	Welcome and Introductions	With the absence of the Chair, Julie Gilhespie was asked to chair the meeting.		
1.	Apologies for Absence	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ben Houchen, - Bill Scott, - David Smith, - Shaun Casey 		
2.	Declarations of Interest	There were no interests declared		
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2023 were approved as correct record.	To upload final minutes to the website.	CM
4.	Senior Responsible Officer Update	<p>Julie Gilhespie presented a report providing general update on Freeport activity and the activities of the wider Tees Valley Combined Authority Group.</p> <p>Julie informed members that the Tees Valley Investment Zone had been paused whilst the Authority underwent the Tees Valley Review. It was further delayed with the General Election; however, Government has confirmed that the Investment Zones will be going forward.</p> <p>Information on the Investment Zones should be available in the coming weeks following response from Government to the Tees Valley Review letter sent by Ben Houchen.</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <p>Board note the content of the report.</p>		

5.	Freeport Delivery Plan Update	<p>Members received update on the proposals for Freeport Delivery Planning. Within the update they were provided with a presentation that detailed background information on the freeport itself and progress with the workstreams.</p> <p>Thanks was given to Siobhan McArdle for the detailed information provided.</p> <p>*Pursuant to paragraph 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, the minutes held on the confidential appendices are exempt from publication*</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Board notes the content of the report; ii) Approves the delivery plan proposed within appendix 1. 	<p>SM to invite the current CSO (Caspers) representative to the following Freeport Board.</p> <p>To add 'Comparison between Custom Zones and Bonding Warehouses' to next Agenda.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>CM</p>
6.	Inward Investment and Marketing Workstream Update	<p>Update on the Inward Investment and Marketing Workstream was provided during Item 5. Information is provided below.</p> <p><i>The workstream is chaired by the TVCA's Business Board Chair and includes membership from Landowners and Freeport Representatives. The workstream will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Market the Freeport effectively to attract private investment into the Freeport.</i> - <i>Ensure appropriate support is provided to investors who commit to the Freeport to help deliver their investment.</i> - <i>Plan / Coordinate Freeport marketing direction.</i> - <i>Review alignment with Freeport sectors.</i> - <i>Review the creation of new roles associated with the Freeport and identifies the skills gaps.</i> - <i>Recommend an action plan to address skills gaps and support a programme of reemployment.</i> 		

7.	Risk and Accountability Workstream Update	<p>Members received update on the Risk and Accountability Workstream. The papers provided an overview of the activity and gave detailed explanation of the key areas explored by the group.</p> <p>Query was raised on the allocation of the £25 million received by the Freeport with discussion held on the specific areas of the zone that have received funding.</p> <p>Gary Macdonald noted that the allocations of funds had been provided within the approved business case for the Teesside Freeport.</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <p>Board notes the content of the report.</p>		
8.	Tax Extension	<p>Members received a report detailing information on the tax extension delivery plan. The report noted actions required to be completed by the Freeport to allow the progression of the extension.</p> <p>After discussion, members requested amendments to the recommendations to reflect requirements to circulate the completed documentation to board. They noted that there were outstanding elements within that required detail, they felt they would need to review this information before submission.</p> <p>Query on the timescales for progressing the tax extension were raised by members. John Coxon, DLUHC Observer, informed members that they weren't sure on the confirmed deadline and would check.</p> <p>Discussion was held by members on the boundary lines of the exemption zones. Focus was noted on the potential changes within the region since the establishment of the boundaries. They were informed</p>	<p>Coordination with Tax site landowners on the tax site extension requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Transfer Notification Protocol. - GANTT Chart for Wilton International. <p>Deadline for the progression of the tax extension to be confirmed.</p>	<p>GM</p> <p>JC</p>

		<p>that there had been requests for changes which were rejected by Government.</p> <p>Within the establishment of the Freeport, there were significant areas of land that would have been considered had they not been constrained by the land limitations. Given the change in Government the board agreed that it was incumbent on them to raise the matter regarding the boundaries with Government.</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Board notes the content of the report; ii) The recommendations be amended to require that the completed documentation be shared with board before submission. 	To write to Government with the queries of the board.	JG
9.	Compliance Report including Risk Register and Finance Report	<p>Gary Macdonald provided update on the Compliance Report and the annual reporting outcomes.</p> <p>Members raised concern with quoracy and lack of substitution to the board. They felt that they should have the opportunity to nominate several individuals who could attend based on their subject matter knowledge.</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Board notes the content of the report; iv) The Board recommends that TVCA Cabinet amend the constitution in regard to Freeport to allow named substitutes. 	To request Cabinet consider the implementation of two named substitutes for Freeport Board.	ES
10.	Tees Valley Review:	Julie Gilhespie provided update on the response to the Tees Valley Review and the ask of the Freeport Board regarding Governance amendments.		

	<p>Recommendations for Freeport Board</p>	<p>Members raised query on the Authorities focus on meeting the expectations of the review and the timeline for completion.</p> <p>JG provided an explanation to members that the Authority had already met some of the expectations and had been working for some time to deliver on these. The response to the Secretary of State has been submitted and the Authority awaits the response from them.</p> <p>Secondary query was raised on the volume and size of papers for Freeport Board meetings with members noting that they may not have the available time to review the items in full. They felt that summarised documents or streamlined agenda packs could support their activities, whilst acknowledging the depth of reporting required to meet the requirements if the Independent Review.</p> <p>Members were informed that the format and nature of reporting would be reviewed.</p> <p>Resolved that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Board notes the content of the report; and ii) Agree to the implementation of the recommendations. 	<p>To review the format and volume of papers provided to board in advance of meetings.</p>	<p>ES</p>
11.	Date and Time of Next Meeting	Thursday 16 January 2025 at 10.00am		