

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2026

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors N Clarke (Chair), A Brennan (Vice-Chair), R Inglis, R Upton, D Virdi
and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
A Hill	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Pregon	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

77 Declarations of Interest

The Leader stated that he wished to make a declaration on behalf of himself and Councillor Brennan in respect of Item 6 on the agenda, as he was a Director of the East Midlands Freeport and Councillor Brennan was the nominated alternative. This was a non-pecuniary interest, and the Leader confirmed that they would both be taking part in the debate and voting.

78 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 April 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

79 Citizens' Questions

There were no Citizens' questions.

80 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Upton.

"There is little clarity on the ownership model proposed for the site beyond Uniper as landowner, and the primary benefit to local residents appears to be a diminishing promise of jobs. At this strategic stage, what concrete steps are the Cabinet and its partners taking to ensure that the wealth generated by these

data centres is retained within the local economy, rather than extracted elsewhere?”

Councillor Upton stated that the Council had no control over the future ownership model for the site, and he felt that concerns raised regarding reduced jobs was flawed, given there was no reduction in anticipated employment numbers. Data centre use was already permitted within the existing LDO and Councillor Upton advised that the Government had called for data centres sites, known as AI Growth Zones, and that the East Midlands Combined County Authority had submitted a bid for them. He confirmed that development on the site, including data centres would generate significant Business Rates, which would be retained for reinvestment in the local area.

Councillor Walker asked a supplementary question.

“Have you considered alternative business models that prioritise community wealth building, local democratic ownership, and long-term social value rather than primarily extracted or externally owned businesses, and if so, what models have you explored?”

Councillor Upton reiterated that the main wealth generation for Rushcliffe would be through Business Rates, which would then be cascaded across the local area and the Council was not in control of other financial matters.

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Upton. Councillor Thomas was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by the Leader, Councillor Clarke MBE.

“The licence for water extraction is from the Trent, not the Soar, and the Soar is considerably closer to the Southern site than the Trent. It is not clear to us from the documentation how the water will get across the A453 to the data centre, or how it will get back to the Trent for discharge. Residents are concerned, the Soar must be protected from temperature increases. Will there be conditions on approval of Certificates of Compliance (or planning applications) to require that heat generated by cooling data centres on the power station site will be harvested and reused?”

Councillor Upton agreed that the current licence for water extraction was from the River Trent, and that the former power station had used significant amounts for cooling; however, the expectation was that any future water extraction would be significantly lower. He stated that the Local Development Order Amendment report, which he would be presenting later made no changes to water extraction or usage. Councillor Upton advised that there were wide ranging options for cooling data centres; however, currently, the Council was not in a position to say whether any data centre would require river water for cooling, and if so, how much. That would be part of any data centre cooling design and would form part of the Certificate of Compliance process, with any water extraction requiring an environmental licence, and it was too early to comment on specific details.

81 **East Midlands Freeport Change of Accountable Body**

The Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke MBE, presented the report of the Chief Executive, seeking Cabinet support for the transfer of Accountable Body Status of the East Midlands Freeport (EMF) from Leicestershire County Council to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).

The Leader referred to the three recommendations detailed in the report and to paragraph 4.4, which detailed the requirement and timeframe for the transfer of the Accountable Body Status. The Leader felt that the transfer to EMCCA was sensible and advised that it had been discussed and approved by other members and he was happy to propose the recommendations.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan stated that this would help to simplify the EMF structure, making it easier to encourage investment in the area. She noted that there were proposals for six month reviews to look at strategic alignment between EMCCA, EMF and wider regional priorities, and she hoped that the proposed changes would reduce fragmentation going forward.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the transfer of accountable body status for the East Midlands Freeport (EMF) from Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) be approved;
- b) EMCCA becoming a founder member of the East Midlands Freeport be agreed; and
- c) the necessary changes to the governance documents be agreed, to enable this transfer to take place in accordance with the principles set out in this report.

82 **Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Local Development Order - Amendment**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, detailing proposed amendments to the Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order (LDO).

Councillor Upton referred to the history of the site and the establishment of the LDO in July 2023, which was adopted to help streamline the planning process. The LDO specified permitted use types, effectively granting outline planning consent, and it was hoped that this would accelerate development and provide greater certainty to investors. Councillor Upton confirmed that the LDO had to be reviewed this summer; however, this could be done by the local planning authority at any time. The LDO already identified data centres as an appropriate use on the northern part of the site; however, this report was concerned with allowing them to be built on the southern part. Councillor Upton stated that since the LDO was approved, market conditions and the political situation had changed, with a major, national initiative to increase data centre

development to help drive economic growth, with the Government categorising data centres as critical national infrastructure. He advised that use of the northern part of the site was severely restricted, possibly until 2031; and the site owner Uniper had asked the Council to consider three proposed amendments, as detailed in paragraph 1.2 of the report. EMCCA had also submitted a bid to the Government for the site to be an AI Growth Zone.

Councillor Upton confirmed that Cabinet deferred the report at its previous meeting to further consider concerns raised regarding the whole site's future redevelopment. He stated that since then positive discussions had taken place with Uniper, as detailed in paragraph 3.4, and he felt that this should bring reassurance regarding the redevelopment of the entire site. The report and appendices included responses to the public consultation, together with the latest schedule of proposed amendments detailed at Appendix 1 and Councillor Upton summarised the key issues around the three proposed amendments. In respect of the first amendment, it was considered that the main issues raised in the consultation had been addressed, as outlined in paragraphs 4.9 to 4.31, with none considered sufficient to justify refusal to allow data centres to be located on the southern part of the site. In respect of the second amendment, Councillor Upton confirmed that it would provide greater discretion to the Council to allow environmental mitigation proposals to come forward earlier and potentially in advance of development. In respect of the third amendment, it was noted that the LDO required applicants to submit a Local Labour Agreement (LLA) to demonstrate that a development offered local employment opportunities during the construction phase. The Council supported this; however, the wording was considered ambiguous and the amendment would clarify that individual LLAs would be required for each plot.

Councillor Upton referred to the comments made by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Group, at its meeting on 16 March, which were detailed in paragraphs 4.66 to 4.70. In respect of the Group's comments around the decision making process, he confirmed that the decision to amend the LDO was an Executive, Cabinet decision. He concluded by referring to the financial implications if the amendments were not approved, as detailed in paragraph 7.1.3.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler referred to this important development opportunity, with potential for huge economic growth and employment. It was important that the local community was involved and supportive of the redevelopment, with safeguards in place, and he was confident that Uniper would work with all parties going forward.

Councillor Viridi felt that the amendments were pragmatic, given the changing national, economic priorities, allowing Rushcliffe and the region to respond at pace, whilst maintaining planning controls. It would also unlock delivery on the site much sooner, support inward investment, strengthen the wider EMF proposition, and potentially generate significant long term Business Rates.

Councillor Brennan was pleased that Uniper was demonstrating its commitment to clear the site, preparing it for development and she reiterated that this was an extremely important site for innovative and high tech investment, for Rushcliffe, regionally and potentially nationally.

The Leader agreed with comments made and hoped that this would bring earlier development and investment to the site.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the consultation representations received on the proposed amendments to the Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order be noted;
- b) the proposed amendments to Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order in accordance with Schedule 4A(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) be approved; and
- c) the Director – Development and Economic Growth or Assistant Director of Planning be granted delegated authority to incorporate the approved amendments into the Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order and publish the amended Local Development Order.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CHAIR