

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting – 12th June 2025

Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Limited (the “Company”) - Company Number: 14109106

Directors Present

Jan Ward	JW	Chair
Cllr Tudor Evans	TE	PCC
Cllr John Birch	JB	SHDC
Adrian Bratt	AB	Princess Yachts
Harry Wass	HW	LEPL (alternate)
Richard Davies	RD	University of Plymouth
Jenny Milligan	JM	University of Plymouth (alternate)
Jo Wall	JW	MOD (ex-officio alternate)

Director Apologies

Peter Sadler	PS	Sherford Consortium (proxy given to Chair)
Steve Pickup	SP	LEPL
Brig Mike Tanner	MT	MOD (ex-officio)

Observers Present

David Draffan	DD	PCC
Chris Brook	CB	SHDC
Melanie Sealey	MS	DCC
Julia Blaschke	JBL	PCC Accountable Body
Cath Parnell	CP	PCC Accountable Body
Colin Bettison	CB	PCC Accountable Body
Richard May	RM	PASDF
Ian Cooper	IC	PASDF
Eifion Jones	EJ	PASDF
Rebekah Southern	RS	PASDF
Ollie Woodham	OW	PCC (Finance)
Nicola Dowrick	ND	MHCLG

Preliminary Matters

Jan Ward was appointed chair of the meeting (the “Chair”). Proper notice of the meeting had been given in accordance with the Company’s Articles of Association (the “Articles”) and a quorum was present. Accordingly, the Chair declared the meeting open.

Business of the Meeting

The Chair reported that the business of the meeting was as detailed in the agenda previously circulated.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Declarations of Interest

No conflicts of interest declared.

The Board was made aware that Cllr Julian Brazil will represent Devon County Council as Freeport Board Director following the local elections. He will join the Board for the next meeting.

Action: to on-board Cllr Brazil, update Companies House records and provide a briefing.

Minutes of the last Board meeting on 13th March 2025 had already been circulated, approved by written procedures, and published.

It was confirmed that all actions arising from the previous minutes had been completed.

There were no matters arising.

Agenda Item 2: Main Topics

a. Demand Drives

Four channels of activity were introduced as ways to drive future investment generation focused on: new business; local growth; partnerships; and developers, with more detail provided on the new business channel.

Q&A

New Business

RD – asked for a reminder of the Freeport’s target sectors – confirmed as Marine, Defence, Space, Advanced Manufacturing/ Engineering and Net Zero.

DD – gave some practical examples and emphasised the current strength of interest in the offer, especially in Defence where interest has accelerated. Dual use solutioning is key.

RD – confirmed his commitment to the agenda and offered to introduce the Freeport team to one of his UoP Board members who is actively engaged in national Defence forums.

Action: RD to introduce Freeport team to relevant UoP Board member.

RM – emphasised the need to marshal leads effectively across partners with a more open architecture such as a combined NDA, which Board members supported.

JW – asked about skills. RD explained that there is a Skills Pillar under GAP led by City College Plymouth and UoP’s contribution to this is a skills focused advanced tech autonomy hub. RD and JM explained the need to generate confidence in the requirements, in order to build curriculum in new skills areas.

DD – referenced the GAP intelligence on future skills needs which focuses on people who have barriers to work as well as attracting new skills into the area and inspiring the future workforce. Skills and housing are both central to this agenda.

RM – outlined the Freeport’s role in bringing in investment into the city and confirmed that the team will work with partners to identify skills and other needs as part of that process.

JB – asked if the Freeport captures data on why some businesses do not want to invest. It was confirmed that the availability of premises within the timescales that some businesses are working to can be a challenge.

DD – made the point that PCC is the only partner currently building speculatively (at Beaumont Way and Oceansgate). He also highlighted that delays with DIO surrendering the land at Oceansgate have resulted in the loss of two tenants.

CB – highlighted the need to ensure the conversation brings in other regional partners outside of Plymouth.

Local Growth and Strategic Partnership Drives

Further insight was given on these two Demand Drives which support growth and additional investment into the Freeport and the local area.

RD – confirmed that student skills and strategic partnerships are UoP’s two priorities.

JM – observed a significant change in the local offer and the need to bring our partnerships together.

MS – suggested that Exeter Science Park and Appledore are added to the partnerships demand drive list.

DD – requested that the Chair writes to PCC’s Chief Exec to understand the role of the Freeport within the GAP context to help provide clarity.

Action: Freeport Chair to write to Plymouth City Council’s Chief Executive to establish clarity on the role of the Freeport within the wider ecosystem.

Developer Drive

Further insight was given on this Demand Drive that seeks to bring private and accompanying public/private investment into the building out of Tax Sites.

DD – highlighted concerns about the current viability gaps and suggested that a summit/workstream on supply would be useful. Support from a PCC development manager and charter surveyor was offered. This offer was appreciated and confirmed that it will be taken up at the right time. There is currently a developer in advanced negotiations on a JV for the Langage site and more will be shared on this for the next Board meeting.

ND – mentioned an upcoming Strategic Sites Accelerator Fund which was announced in the Spending Review and may be an option to consider in future.

Action: developer demand drive to be the focus of the next Board meeting, including behind the wire options for South Yard.

b. Governance Changes

The 2025-6 Annual Plan included an action to complete an Advisory Board review in recognition of the fact that the Freeport is now effectively mobilised, and the focus needs to shift more substantively to demand and landing private investment. A proposal was brought to the Board on how to best achieve this, also reflecting changes in the wider ecosystem and seeking to ensure that the Freeport adds value to new wider initiatives such as Growth Alliance Plymouth (GAP), whilst avoiding duplication.

JW – emphasised how the proposed Demand Advisory Sub-committee could play an important role in joining activities up, reflecting previous discussions around the demand drives. Whilst new business is important, the Demand Advisory Sub-committee will also need to oversee the other drives, especially the developer drive, to be aware of supply.

JB – requested that all members of the Board are sent the agenda for the proposed Demand Advisory Sub-committee and have the option to attend should they wish.

DD – asked that the proposed membership is worked through with PCC team in light of recent defence announcements.

RD – asked about the relationship with GAP and the city's Innovation structures. It was confirmed that the proposed Demand Advisory Sub-committee would not duplicate this; and that the Freeport would have membership on these wider structures so as to deliver its key initiatives such as hotbeds of innovation.

ND – confirmed that there would be no need for a Project Change Request to make the changes. But there will be a need to subsume the security and compliance aspects into the main Board.

Decision: to a) streamline the Freeport Board's advisory support; replacing the current Innovation, Trade & Investment and Skills Advisory Boards with a single Demand Advisory Sub-committee; b) discontinue the Security & Compliance Sub-Committee.

Note: the background paper also offered to re-purpose the Seed Capital Sub-Committee's Infrastructure Sub Group for South Yard and the Port to provide additional governance for Oceansgate. This is for PCC to consider.

Action: Revisit proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the above and workshop practicalities with the new Sub-committee.

Agenda Item 3: Updates (pre-read documents)

- a. Seed Capital Highlights
- b. Programme Risk Register
- c. Accountable Body
- d. Marketing & Communications
- e. Financials
- f. Financial Resilience Working Group
- g. HMG Liaison and Reporting

Verbal updates on developments since the pre-read reports were prepared and Q&A

JB – asked for an update on the pedestrian cycle bridge which was provided.

EJ – made the Board aware of an upcoming event at Langage, which is to be scheduled for the Autumn.

RM – highlighted that a Strategic Comms Plan will be brought to the next Board.

JB – asked that any new messaging in the Comms Plan should reference Plymouth and South Devon, not just Plymouth. It was agreed that all partners will be asked to contribute.

IC – made the Board aware that Plymouth's S151 Officer has now been on-boarded and regular meetings have been established which have been opened up to all S151s. The PCC Finance team were thanked for all their support.

RS – confirmed that the Freeport's Bi-annual M&E return is about to be submitted and thanked everyone who had contributed to the exercise, and in particular the Accountable Body.

RM – highlighted some very productive recent ministerial engagements and the opportunity to engage in six-monthly Freeport-wide meetings with Minister Poppy Gustafson going forward.

RD – would welcome further dialogue and engagement around this.

ND – confirmed that announcements about the Industrial Strategy are upcoming. She also confirmed that Government was very pleased with the PASD Freeport's performance, and this was reflected in the Annual Performance Review.

Agenda Item 4: AOB

JW – asked the Local Authority partners in particular to think about how we might configure some future open meetings/AGM.

MS – offered support to develop a fresh briefing to the new DCC Freeport Board Director.

TE – asked for a presentation on the work of the Freeport to the next PCC Cabinet and commented that there is a lot to celebrate.

Action: Local Authorities to advise on approaches to future open AGM.

Action: Freeport to present to next PCC Cabinet.

Summary of Actions

Action	Responsibility
On-board Cllr Brazil, update Companies House records and provide a briefing	Freeport team
Introduce Freeport team to relevant UoP Board members	UoP
Write to Plymouth’s Chief Executive to establish clarity on the role of the Freeport within the wider ecosystem	Chair of Board
Focus on developer demand drive at the next Board meeting	Freeport team
Revisit proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the Demand Advisory Sub-committee and workshop practicalities	Freeport team
Advise on approaches to future open AGM	Local Authorities
Present to next PCC Cabinet	Freeport team

Date of Next Meeting:

2nd October 2025

Signed:



Chair.....