CABINET

27th June 2025

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

A.1 ADOPTION OF THE FREEPORT EAST RETAINED BUSINESS RATES AGREEMENT AND ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2025/26

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT
To seek Cabinet's, in principle, approval of the Freeport East Retained Business Rates Agreement, acting as the Billing Authority, in line with the Council's 'Freeport East Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates', and to set out the next steps to finalise the Agreement. To ask Cabinet, acting as Founding Member, to approve the Freeport East Ltd Annual Business Plan for 2025/26, as required by the Members' Agreement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Freeport East Retained Business Rates Agreement Freeport East is a government backed hub for investment, trade and innovation. It is central to the government's agenda for driving clean growth, promoting regeneration and job creation. Freeport East includes the Port of Felixstowe, Harwich International Port, and the Gateway 14 business park in Stowmarket, Suffolk. It comprises 275 hectares of space and facilities across three sites eligible for tax relief ("Tax Sites") at Felixstowe dock, Bathside Bay in Harwich, and Gateway 14 in Stowmarket. Freeport East Ltd was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in December 2022. It was established by a range of local public and private partners, including Tendring District Council, to act as the main counterpart to Government for delivery of the freeport policy for Freeport East. Freeport East, in consultation with partners, has developed a 'Local Growth & Investment Strategy' (formerly the Retained Business Rates Strategy) that sets out how Freeport East will pool, allocate, spend and monitor the retained business rate income that is collected on the freeport tax sites over the next 25 years. This includes the company's operational costs. The Strategy was approved by the Board in March 2024 and fully reflects decisions made by Tendring District Council in relation to Business Rates usage. To achieve the site developments envisaged in the Full Business Case, 70 per cent of the total retained Business Rates from the Harwich tax site are planned to be allocated to support the further development of the Harwich tax site to achieve the outcomes of the Green Energy Hub. As a result, the Freeport East's 'Local Growth & Investment Strategy' aims to align with the Council's 'Freeport East Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates', approved by Cabinet

in January 2023.

Separately the Billing Authorities, which includes Tendring District Council, decided a ‘Retained Business Rates Agreement’ was required to be put in place to ensure there is clarity around forecasting, collection and management of Business Rates funds in a manner that is consistent with the Local Growth & Investment Strategy.

The Freeport East Accountable Body, East Suffolk Council, instructed legal firm Browne Jacobson to prepare the Retained Business Rates Agreement for Freeport East (Appendix A) on their behalf. On the 14 March 2025 Browne Jacobson circulated a draft document for partners building on the Local Growth & Investment Strategy.

It is important to note that this document is not designed to override the Local Growth & Investment Strategy and is primarily aimed at dealing with the “mechanics” of the relationships between the Billing Authorities, Accountable Body and Freeport East Limited, to ensure the timely sharing of relevant information and movement of funds, where applicable, between the parties. The agreement recognises that it may need to change from time to time to reflect any amendments to the Local Growth & Investment Strategy, as may be determined by a decision of the Governing Body (i.e., through a decision of the Directors of Freeport East Limited).

The document has been reviewed by the S151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive of Tendring District Council and some minor changes are required to the current draft to ensure it aligns fully with the:

- Tendring Council’s *Freeport East Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates*;
- Tendring Council’s *Freeport East Policy for Granting Non-Discretionary Domestic Rates Relief*; and
- Freeport East Ltd’s *Freeport East Local Growth and Investment Strategy (formerly the Retained Business Rates Strategy): Using retained business rates on freeport tax sites*

Acknowledgement and comments will be supplied to Browne Jacobson for inclusion prior to completion and adoption of the document by the Billing Authorities and Freeport East Ltd.

Freeport East Ltd. Business Plan 2025/26

On the 24 May 2024, Cabinet approved the Freeport East Ltd. Annual Business plan for 2024/25 and delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to approve future annual business plans on behalf of Tendring District Council as a Founding Member of Freeport East Ltd. The Leader is bringing the business plan to Cabinet for approval in the context of this wider update on Freeport East.

Freeport East Ltd has produced a draft Annual Business Plan 2025/26 (Appendix B). The Business Plan sets out their vision and purpose and key priorities for the year:

- developing a high performing organisation;
- delivering on ambitious vision for Freeport East;
- delivering investment; and
- making the most of its visibility and voice.

The Business Plan also sets out how Freeport East Ltd will deliver those priorities, including the types of activities they will pursue, and the resources needed. It also sets out a high-level summary of key achievements for 2023/24, its first year of operation and will be presenting their second Annual Report at the Annual General Meeting in September 2025 to be published thereafter, which will showcase achievements against the 2024/25 Business Plan.

The Business Plan needs to be approved by the Founding Members as set out in the Members Agreement. Once the Business Plan is approved, Freeport East intend to publish the final version on their website as an important means to convey to the wider public the scope of what they are delivering.

As well as setting the direction for the organisation, the Business Plan also creates a framework for expenditure that can be followed internally. Freeport East Ltd costs in the region of £1.25m per year, funded originally through Government grant but now through the business rate income as set out in the Local Growth & Investment Strategy and elsewhere in this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

a) **in its role as Billing Authority, notes the progress made to date to complete the Freeport East Retained Business Rates Agreement, and subject to (b) agrees the approach as proposed in Appendix A;**
b) **delegates to the Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer the authority to approve and sign the final Freeport East Retained Business Rates Agreement in line with the Council's Freeport East Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates and Freeport East Policy for Granting Non-Discretionary Domestic Rates Relief; and**
c) **in its role as a Founding Member and in accordance with the Members' Agreement approves the 2025/26 Freeport East Ltd. Annual Business Plan.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendation to complete the approval of the Freeport East Retained Business Rate Agreement will provide a signed agreement that protects the Council and puts into legal effect the relevant parts of the Freeport East Local Growth and Investment Strategy and documents the underlying mechanisms to support its implementation. The Agreement sets out the relationships and obligations between the Billing Authorities, Freeport East and the Accountable Body regarding the collection, pooling and initial allocation of Retained Business Rates; it does not relate to how decisions regarding the distribution of Retained Business Rates are made. The parties have agreed to enter into this Agreement to record how Retained Business Rates will be collected and pooled.

The Freeport East Business Plan provides clarity on the plans for 2025/26 and the Council's approval follows the requirement of the Members' Agreement and good governance.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option is for the Council not to approve the Retained Business Rates Agreement; however this could expose Tendring District Council to increased risk in the administration of Freeport East business rates and would not align the Council with partners within Freeport East Ltd. If the Council did not approve the Business Plan, the Council would not be acting in accordance with the Members' Agreement and Freeport East Ltd would not have the required approval to implement its plans for 2025/6.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES
The Council's corporate priorities include raising aspirations and creating opportunities. Under this objective there is a specific objective to take the opportunities afforded by Freeport East and the development of Bathside Bay. The Council's Economic Strategy 2020 to 2024 states that a key action should be to "Work with Essex County Council to facilitate senior level discussion with the owners of Harwich Port to secure an agreed long-term strategy for the Port. Based on these discussions, develop a clear plan for investment in quayside infrastructure." The Economic Strategy also identifies Clean Energy as a growth sector which should be targeted. Freeport East's planned focus on Net Zero complements this objective, alongside TDC's ambitions for an Innovation Centre to complement the Freeport East development at Bathside Bay.
OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)
The Freeport East Portfolio Holder Working Party is a key mechanism to enable engagement across the Council on Freeport East, which has helped to shape Council policy on the Freeport, for example the focus highlighting the importance of transport and skills. The Working Party last met on 11 June 2025 and had the opportunity to engage on the Business Plan and the Retained Business Rates Agreement.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)			
Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	**YES**	**If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision**	x **Significant effect on two or more wards** ☐ **Involves £100,000 expenditure/income** ☐ **Is otherwise significant for the service budget**
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	27 May 2025

Retained Business Rates
Under paragraph 39(1) (designation of areas) of schedule 7B to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 – local retention of non-domestic rates, the Freeport tax sites are to be classed as a designated area with effect from 1 April 2023 for a fixed term of 25 years from the date the tax site was designated for the purposes of tax relief.

The Billing Authorities, signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), will retain 100% of the collectible Business Rates in excess of a baseline agreed with MHCLG.

Freeports Business Rates Relief
At the Autumn Statement on 30 November 2023 the government announced that the window to claim Freeport tax relief would be extended from five to ten years, until 30 September 2031 for English Freeports.

Central Government is not changing the legislation relating to the reliefs available to businesses and has produced guidance for all local authorities that use their discretionary powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), to grant relief to those ratepayers who are eligible. A billing authority in England, when making a decision under subsection (3) of S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 must have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The Council's retained rates policy (approved Jan 2023) reflects the principles set out in the associated Government guidance. The 'cost' of awarding reliefs under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 will be fully reimbursed by the Government via S31 grants under the Local Government Act 2003.

This Agreement will come back to Cabinet at a future date if policy revisions are required by Freeport East Ltd. and / or Government. The recommendations as proposed allow for changes to be made and approved with delegations to officers, so long as the principles and objectives of the agreement follow existing Council policy.

Subsidy Control
The Subsidy Control Act 2022 ("the Act") came into effect from 4 January 2023.

Following ongoing dialogue between the Freeports and the Government regarding the pressures the Subsidy Control assessments would put on the Billing Authorities, MHCLG published the English Freeports Subsidy Scheme in April 2024, which covers a blend of measures, enabling public authorities to provide targeted support to promote economic activity in Freeport locations in England, which includes Business Rates Relief.

The public policy objective of the English Freeports Subsidy Scheme is to reduce inequality and to support the Government's stated ambition to level up parts of the UK economy and the country which needs regeneration and investment, ensuring that disadvantaged groups or regions have increased economic opportunity.

Under the English Freeports Subsidy Scheme, any business rate relief must be awarded in accordance with the guidance produced for local authorities to be consistent with the subsidy control principles, so long as the eligibility principles are observed. This means that local authorities who satisfy themselves that an award complies with this guidance are not required to conduct their own assessment of the award against the subsidy control principles. It also

means that a subsidy awarded under the scheme that complies with this guidance is insulated from legal challenge under the Subsidy Control Act. The Council must still comply with the transparency requirements set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (Chapter 3 of Part 2) and so will have an obligation to report some subsidies awarded under the scheme. Worth noting is that there is no cap to the value of a Business Rates relief award that can be made under the Freeports programme subsidy control scheme. For the avoidance of doubt, subsidies awarded under the Scheme do not constitute Minimum Financial Assistance and so do not cumulate with Minimum Financial Assistance awards.

☐	**The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:**

No additional comments to the content of the report, as feedback provided has been considered through the drafting.
FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
The majority of the retained rates are expected to come in from Gateway 14 first, then from the Felixstowe tax site, and finally from Bathside Bay, and so pay for the costs of the team in that order. The Local Growth and Investment Strategy approved by Freeport East's Board makes it clear that if Bathside Bay does not come forward Tendring District Council as the Billing Authority will not be liable for the cost of the team. Work to ensure there is effective forecasting of future business rate income will be part of a Business Rates agreement between the Billing Authorities and Freeport East. The Accountable Body for Freeport East Ltd requires the completion of this agreement ahead of distribution of business rates to Freeport East to pay for the costs of the operation, which means that signing the Agreement remains a red risk on the register for the Freeport East Ltd Board.

☐	**The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:**

It is understood that the intention of the proposed Freeport East Retained Business Rates Agreement is to simply 'translate' the approach set out within the previously agreed Local Growth and Investment Strategy rather than create any additional conditions and/or requirements etc. The policy is therefore currently being reviewed with partners on this basis to enable the distribution of retained rates income to be undertaken as soon as possible in 2025/26.
USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY
The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	This Agreement sets out how business rates will flow between different organisations within the Freeport East system, providing further assurance that the Council's position as a Billing Authority is protected.

B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The Council reviews Freeport East matters carefully at an Officer and Member level, providing advice to the Freeport East Ltd. Board member ahead of meetings. The Portfolio Holder Working Party provides additional constructive support and challenge, deepening the approach to governance across the Council for Freeport East.
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	The Council is primarily an enabler in Freeport East, using its powers as a billing authority to support the development of the programme, with investment for site and project delivery coming from other parties. The Council engages with the Freeport East Ltd team, the Bathside Bay site owner HPUK and other councils in the programme to seek to get best value for Tendring from the investments taking place as part of the programme.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Retained Business Rates Agreement

- TDC to provide Browne Jacobson with their comments regarding the Retained Business Rates Agreement.
- Browne Jacobson to finalise the report for distribution and approval.
- TDC to sign the agreement in partnership with the Billing Authorities.

Freeport East Ltd. Business Plan 2025/26

- Freeport East Ltd. to receive approval from the Freeport East Board Members.
- Freeport East Ltd. to present the final plan at the Annual General Meeting in September 2025.
- The Freeport East Ltd. Business Plan 2025/26 is published.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Risk to not entering into the Retained Business Rates Agreement. Not entering into an agreement could disadvantage the Council as the process for administering business rates may not be clear.

Risk to delivery. Despite this Retained Business Rates Agreement, there remains a significant risk that Bathside Bay is not delivered through the programme. The site requires significant commercial and public sector investment, and there is no guarantee that commercial partners or government agencies will come forward.

Risk of sale of HPUK. The BlackRock-TiL consortium (including BlackRock, Global Infrastructure Partners, and Terminal Investment Limited) acquired a 90 percent stake in Panama Ports Company (PPC) and an 80 percent stake in 43 ports worldwide, including Felixstowe, from CK Hutchison for $22.8 billion. This deal includes ports and terminals in 23 countries. Currently, there is limited information regarding the sale and the commitment to continue with the Freeport status.

Risk to reputation of not delivering Freeport East. There are reputational risks of being part of the Freeport East Company if Bathside Bay is not delivered. The Council is clear that it will do everything in its power to support Bathside Bay, but ultimately the Harwich Tax site is a commercial proposition and a Government policy; Tendring District Council can only play its part in the programme, for example through our Planning and Business Rates policies. The Council cannot develop out the site ourselves, or invest heavily in it at risk.

Financial risk
The Council will receive the funding we have put into Freeport East, of £160,000, back from business rates over time, and the Tendring area is expected to benefit substantially in the coming decades from investment from retained business rates, which are pooled through Freeport East from the three tax sites and then will fund projects across the Freeport Area.

As set out in the finance section, if the Bathside Bay Harwich tax site does not come forward and so generate business rates, the Council will not be required to pay rates on its behalf. funding from Freeport East we will get the money back whatever we pay across plus the £160k.

Staffing costs. There is a theoretical risk of staffing costs for Freeport East Ltd falling to Billing Authorities while the Retained Rates Agreement is not finalised, as rates cannot be shared with the Accountable body until then to pass on to Freeport East to pay for staff. However, the Accountable body is currently funding Freeport East, given the wider cash balances it holds for the programme such as seed capital.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's previous equality impact assessment for Freeport East has two main findings.

- As a jobs programme, Freeport East will impact primarily on people of working age, or younger people who will become of working age. It is not targeted at older people. However, there is no need to change the operation of the programme, which legitimately primarily benefits people of working age.
- Secondly, green energy sector jobs are predominantly taken up by men. The International Renewable Energy Agency states that the "Wind energy sector is male dominated, with women representing just 21% of the workforce" in its 2020 Annual Review, page 13. As such, there will be a need to be a focus on supporting women's entry into the workforce.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

There is very significant social value potential with the Freeport programme. The development has the potential for 3,500 jobs at the Harwich Tax site, and a skills development programme that will help residents to learn the skills to access the jobs. The Freeports are able to spend Business Rates for a period of 25 years locally, on the development of the infrastructure to create the sites in the first place (Pot B) and on local regeneration schemes, including skills development so people can access the jobs (Pot C). The economic strategy submitted as part of the Planning process associated with Bathside Bay includes 10 day local advertising to give residents an opportunity to access jobs ahead of competitors from outside the District.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation generate some uncertainty for Freeport East Ltd., as the current roles of the District and County Councils will be replaced by the Unitary Council and Greater Essex County Combined Authority (GECCA) in Essex, and the Mayoral Strategic Authority in Suffolk. The exact role of the GECCA is to be determined in relation to Freeport Policy, although it is expected to be a priority. The role of the Billing Authority will fall to the new Unitary Authority covering the Harwich Tax site, and so this agreement will need to be updated when the District Council's responsibilities move into the Unitary.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2050
The shift to the UK becoming net zero by 2050 relies on shifting energy use from petrol and gas to electricity, and shifting electricity production from carbon intensive means, like gas fired power stations, to renewables, like wind, solar and nuclear. The development of offshore wind farms in the North Sea is a crucial part of the government's strategy to reach net zero by 2050, and related target for 50GW of offshore wind generation by 2030. In addition, some larger forms of transport like shipping, aircraft and lorries, may find it difficult to move from petrol to electric power given the amount of energy needed to move them. As a result, hydrogen may become a means to power larger transport. The Clean Energy Hub at the Harwich Tax site is designed to support the expansion and management and operations of wind turbines in the North Sea. As such it is part of the effort to shift the country's energy supply towards net zero. The development of hydrogen technology is another route to supporting the energy transition needed to deliver the UK's climate ambitions. The carbon that is used now to develop the Clean Energy Hub is supporting the move away from fossil fuels and towards renewables.

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS	
Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.	
Crime and Disorder	It is expected that customs sites in particular will need to take appropriate measures to ensure the physical site and the systems within them are kept secure. Currently the only customs site which is operational is at Felixstowe. These plans will also ensure that all businesses operating within the Freeport East area will have mandatory minimum security and reporting requirements placed upon them. Given the limited take up of customs sites this risk is low.
Health Inequalities	The impact of the Freeport on jobs is expected to have a consequential positive impact on health inequalities. In the long term the economic benefit that comes from work has a positive impact on people's health; bringing jobs into a location is one of the best public health measures that can be taken.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	Freeports benefit from a Subsidy Control Scheme. The Council will administer Freeport Business Rates Relief in accordance with the Statutory Guidance and associated documents issued by the Government under the Freeport Subsidy Scheme, published on 26 April 2024.
Area or Ward affected	All Wards. The policy will have particularly significant impact on Harwich and Kingsway,

	Dovercourt Bay and Dovercourt Vines and Parkeston where the major Tax Site is located at Bathside Bay.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND
Freeport East • Freeport East is one of the eight Freeports nationally. It aims to benefit traders, manufacturers and clean energy suppliers. It plans to create 13,500 new jobs and generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years. • Freeport East is based around: o the Port of Felixstowe; o Harwich International Port; and o Gateway 14 business park off the A14 near Stowmarket, Suffolk. • It has 275 hectares of space and facilities across three sites eligible for tax relief at Felixstowe dock, Bathside Bay in Harwich, and Gateway 14 in Stowmarket. These sites are also eligible for customs duty relief, and there are four additional sites also eligible for customs reliefs. Maps of Freeport East tax sites - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • The Ports of Harwich and Felixstowe are both currently owned and operated by companies owned by the Hutchison Group Ltd (HPUK) but are in the process of being sold to BlackRock and Mediterranean Shipping Co. (MSC). The Gateway 14 Site in Stowmarket is owned by Mid Suffolk District Council. **Bathside Bay: the Harwich Tax Site** The Harwich Tax Site is intended to be developed as a Clean Energy Hub. Most of the tax site is a tidal bay that needs to be reclaimed from the sea. The Clean Energy Hub will be part of the supply chain as this new offshore wind energy is developed with broadly two types of port users; • the manufacturers who build the windfarm towers and other parts. These manufacturers help bring security of commercial and business rate income and the economic benefits to the area through new jobs, and their supply chains. • the windfarm developers use the port to store the towers etc. for up to two years before installing them in the North Sea. **Retained Rates** Within the Freeport East area are designated areas that offer tax advantages, including the ability for local authorities to retain a portion of business rate growth. Instead of Government receiving a share of the collected business rates, local authorities in Freeport areas can retain a portion, specifically 100% of the growth above the baseline. The retention of business rates growth is guaranteed for 25 years, providing a stable revenue stream for local authorities, which can fund projects that support the Freeport's goals, such as infrastructure improvements, attracting investment, and supporting regeneration and the local workforce.

The Sale of Hutchinson Ports UK (HPUK) to BlackRock and Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC)
On 4 March 2025, the BlackRock-TiL consortium, comprising financial giant BlackRock, Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), a part of BlackRock, and Terminal Investment Limited (TiL), announced that it will acquire CK Hutchison Holdings' 90 percent interest in the Panama Ports Company and a total of 43 ports comprising 199 berths in 23 countries, from Hutchison Port Holdings (HPH) $22.8 billion. The sale would be expected to deliver cash proceeds in excess of $19 billion to CK Hutchison. As of 16th April 2025, the deal is under regulatory review from China on the grounds of fair competition.

Relevant Documents:

'Local Growth & Investment Strategy' (formally the Retained Business Rates Strategy): Freeport East, in consultation with partners, developed a 'Local Growth & Investment Strategy' that sets out how Freeport East will pool, allocate, spend and monitor the retained business rate income that is collected on the freeport tax sites over the next 25 years. (This includes the company's operational costs.)

The Strategy was approved by the Board in March 2024, which reflects this principle in the case of Bathside Bay specifically, and to fully reflect the intent of decisions made by Tendring District Council in relation to business rates usage and to achieve the site developments envisaged in the Full Business Case, 70 precent of the total retained business rates from the Harwich tax site are planned to be allocated to support the further development of the Harwich tax site to achieve the outcomes of the Green Energy Hub. Cabinet approved the Strategy on 24 May 2024.

'Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates': On the 27 January 2022 Cabinet approved Tendring District Council's Freeport East Policy for Managing Retained Business Rates. The purpose of this policy is to set out Tendring District Council's arrangements for managing retained business rates generated in the district as a result of the Freeport East Initiative.

The document outlines how the retained business rates will be apportioned into different 'pots' which will enable Freeport East to deliver against the objectives set out in the Full Business Case. It will also set out the decision making and governance process associated with the expenditure of retained business rates in each of the 'pots'.

'Freeport East Policy for granting Discretionary Non-Domestic Rates Relief': On 27 January 2022 Cabinet approved the Freeport East Policy for granting Discretionary Non-Domestic Rates Relief. The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of discretionary relief to be granted to certain defined ratepayers within the tax site located within the Council's part of the Freeport East area.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Freeport East Outline Business Case – July 2021

Freeport East Business Rates Retention – September 2021

Freeport East Company – October 2022

Memorandum of Understanding- January 2023

Appointment of Tendring District Council representative Company Director on the Board of Freeport East Limited – June 2023

Freeport East Progress and Business Plan – May 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Cabinet report April 2020 – Freeport East

Cabinet report September 2021 – Freeport East Update and Business Rates Retention

Cabinet report January 2022 – Freeport East Progress and Agreement of the MOU

Full Council – Freeport East Full Business Case – March 2022

Cabinet report May 2024 – Freeport East Progress and Business Plan

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Draft Retained Business Rates Agreement. Appendix A Retained Business Rates Agreei

Appendix B – Freeport East Ltd. Business Plan 2025/26 Appendix B Freeport East Business Plan 202

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