

EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026

Our long term plan for sustainable growth

Our Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) outlines the strategic framework for the long-term operation and growth of East Midlands Airport (EMA). It ensures the airport contributes to and benefits from the expanding international aviation sector while maintaining a responsible and community-focused business. The SDP presents a clear vision for growth, detailing our commitment to running the airport sustainability and minimising its environmental impact.

This Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) will replace the previous plan which was published in 2015. This update accounts for significant national and regional changes. A lot has changed since the last SDP – from Brexit and Covid, to more local changes such as the establishment of the East Midlands Combined County Authority as well as the East Midlands Freeport. Given these changes, it is the right time to update the airport's masterplan, ensuring it reflects current realities and charts a sustainable path for future growth.

At EMA, both DHL and UPS have invested significantly in expanding and modernising their hubs, the East Midlands Gateway site with its rail interchange has opened, and the airport's parent company Manchester Airports Group (MAG) has continued to invest in EMA's infrastructure to upgrade facilities.

Our Vision for EMA is:

To continue to deliver effortless travel for passengers from the heart of the country and be the UK's global gateway for air cargo, enabling seamless trade.

Our strategy to achieve this is to:

- Grow our core business and capitalise on our strengths as the UK's most important airport for express air cargo
- Invest in our infrastructure to support long-term growth
- Deliver great customer service and operational excellence and develop a brilliant team of people who share our values
- Play a key part in driving forward the decarbonisation of aviation in the UK
- Work with partners to continue playing an important role in the East Midlands economy
- Work with, support and listen to local communities as a responsible neighbour
- Use our influence to make the case for improved connectivity between EMA's passenger and cargo catchments and the airport.

As we consider the long-term sustainable development of the airport, we must seek to balance the benefits and growth of air transport with global and local environmental impacts. The growth of aviation in the UK is supported through a policy framework that EMA is aligned with, helping to deliver existing and emerging national aviation policy.

This SDP details our ambition for the airport and defines our role in supporting regional economic growth and the development of local transport networks. By making our strategy transparent, the SDP is intended to foster constructive dialogue with customers, partners, local authorities and our neighbouring communities.





Economy

“We will leverage EMA’s globally connected location to maintain and enhance its position as the UK’s leading airport for express air cargo. By playing a proactive role in the East Midlands region, we will collaborate with partners to boost regional economic activity, productivity, and support businesses.”

Principles

- We will work to strengthen EMA’s network of routes and deliver effortless travel for passengers, deepening and expanding our catchment and encouraging inbound traffic.
- We will develop our global air cargo network to consolidate and strengthen our position as the UK’s global gateway for express freight and maximising seamless trade.
- We are one of the East Midlands’ major businesses, and we will develop and strengthen our local supply chain so that other businesses and suppliers in the region can work and grow with us.
- We are committed to creating quality employment, providing opportunities for all in a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment.

Land Use

“To make the best and most efficient use of EMA’s land and its airport facilities in a way that supports the airport’s growth and its future development. To unlock aviation growth, we will focus on maximising land efficiency and density within the current airport site.”

Principles

- To unlock growth, we will focus on maximizing land efficiency and density within the current footprint by:
- Prioritising land use for airport-related activities and services, including Freeport functions.
 - Continuing to provide parking for passengers and staff within the Operational Area.
 - Pursuing environmentally sustainable development, emphasising low-carbon technologies and energy efficiency.

Surface Access

“To be a highly connected location serving the needs of the East Midlands region, EMA’s air passengers and staff across the site, whilst offering internationally competitive seamless global air freight connectivity that supports EMA as the UK’s major express air freight airport.”

Principles

- We recognise that good surface access, especially by public transport is important to our success. Accessibility must be affordable, predictable and reliable.
- We will work to support sustainable accessibility, including the development of public transport, reducing carbon and congestion as well as improving air quality.
- We will work with partners, including through our Airport Transport Forum and EMA Consultative Committee (EMACC) to encourage the development of alternative travel modes including new vehicle technologies and zero-carbon fuels.
- We will establish an EMA Sustainable Transport Fund to support the improvement and development of the airport’s public transport services and active travel.

Environment

“It is important that we work hard and responsibly to minimise the airport’s environmental impacts, make the best use of natural resources, and continue to adopt the best environmental management practices and processes.”

Principles

- Develop and grow responsibly, aligning with our commitment to minimise environmental impacts.
- Engage openly with stakeholders, including airlines, businesses, regulators, and local communities.
- Implement an independently audited environmental and energy management system focused on key environmental issues.
- Retain environmental specialists and continuously develop our people and resources.
- Promote innovation, awareness, and best environmental practices across the site.
- Ensure compliance with all environmental laws and prevent pollution.

Community

“We will operate our business and develop the airport in a responsible way, whilst recognising our local impact and the opportunities that EMA brings. We will work to deliver opportunities for quality and worthwhile work in a safe, equitable, inclusive, and diverse working environment.”

Principles

- Maintain our strong reputation for engaging and working with our local community.
- Be a good neighbour by working to minimise our negative impact and maximise the benefits as much as we possibly can.
- Minimise our negative impact through our Noise Action Plan and mitigation schemes.
- Through career and education opportunities at the airport, work with a range of partners to increase the pipeline of talent into our airport and inspire the next generation of aviation professionals.
- Continue to listen to the views of the local people to understand what matters most to them and ensure that EMA plays a responsible role in our community and the region we serve.