

Rochford is in line for business rates cash bonanza from a new £150million airport business park...while Southend Council won't see a penny.

The site, christened the Saxon Business Park, off Cherry Orchard Way, close to [Southend Airport](#), is on [Rochford](#) Council land, so the authority will now be in line to retain all the business rates generated from the park, despite Southend Council being at the forefront of the scheme.

It comes as the Echo can reveal Rochford Council's development committee will decide on a planning application for the site, expected to create 7,500 jobs, on Thursday, March 17.

And with the Government saying local authorities can retain all their business rates after 2020, the Tory-run council is in line to reap the rewards.

However Southend Council, which has set aside £11million in its budget for the park, albeit some of it grant funding, owns the site and will get rent from businesses moving in there.

Labour's Ian Gilbert, deputy leader of Southend Council, said: "We always knew the boundaries were in Rochford, but we did not anticipate the Government would announce years later that councils will have the ability to retain all the rates they collect.

"But nonetheless, Southend still benefits in terms of the land, and both areas will benefit as hopefully it gives local people access to higher-end jobs."

Last year, the Government gave both authorities £3.2million towards infrastructure costs, but developer Henry Boot will foot the bill for most of the £150million works.

They revealed last year that they were in talks with up to five businesses to move onto the site, which is expected to cater for the industrial and high-tech industries.

They are also looking for permission for a 90-bedroom hotel and retail or restaurant unit on the site, which is expected to create about 7,500 jobs when it is completed by 2021.

Conservative Terry Cutmore, leader of Rochford Council, said: "It's great to see plans moving on – we gave planning permission for the relocation of the rugby club last month.

"Now, we want to see some spades in the ground for the main development.

"Retaining business rates is part of the way forward in the Government's eyes, and it certainly will make a difference to Rochford in the longer term."