



# Annual Report 2011/12



## Chairman and Executive Director's Report

Local authorities continue to work hard on behalf of their communities in the most challenging of environments. It is the role of East Midlands Councils, as a membership organisation, to provide effective support and to work on behalf of local authorities in the East Midlands. In this regard, EMC continues to deliver a number of important roles and responsibilities and over the past year has worked on a range of policy issues, including economic growth, health, housing and local government pay. Working in partnership with a number of organisations, including the LGA, EMC has led the work of local councils on improvement, transformation and efficiency – and through our responsibility for service support to local authorities, EMC has continued to provide a valuable programme of sector-led support on HR and training, councillor and workforce development.

This annual report is part of our commitment to ensure that EMC is accountable to its membership. While we continue to provide benefits to our member authorities, we need to work even harder in meeting the needs and priorities of the sector and through our focus on supporting economic growth and transformation/sector-led improvement; EMC must further demonstrate the tangible value added benefits of membership.

Finally, the hard work and commitment of members, partners and staff should be fully acknowledged – our achievements and benefits to the sector over the past year are a testament to their efforts.



Cllr Martin Hill OBE  
Chairman  
East Midlands Councils



Stuart Young  
Executive Director  
East Midlands Councils

## Accounts

This financial statement details the financial position of East Midlands Councils for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

The accounts of East Midlands Councils are consolidated within those of our accountable body Leicestershire County Council who produce the formal Statement of Accounts.

Reserves as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 stand at £415,000.

### East Midlands Councils 2011/12 Management Accounts (Year End - March 2012)

<b>BUDGET SUMMARY - East Midlands Councils</b>	<b>2011/12 BUDGET</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	273,315	276,093
Contract Income	96,000	117,535
Consultancy/Project Income	265,000	470,843
Income brought forward **	227,000	302,437
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>861,315</b>	<b>1,166,908</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Staff Costs	687,418	796,181
Premises	76,500	58,907
IT & equipment	24,500	27,994
Daily operations	42,897	53,589
Governance Costs	20,000	22,091
Other	10,000	4,037
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>861,315</b>	<b>962,799</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL SURPLUS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>204,109</b>

\*\* trading income from previous years

## Executive Board

The Executive Board is the strategic decision-making body of East Midlands Councils on issues of interest and relevance to Local Authorities at the regional level. It provides a strong voice enabling local government to:

- Work collaboratively with Central Government and its agencies to support the development and delivery of the localism agenda.
- Engage partners in processes for determining major investment priorities.
- Provide a reporting and governance mechanism for local government partnerships on specific issues, such as local government Regional Employers Organisation and the Improvement & Efficiency Partnership.
- Engage with national, European and international institutions (including other sub-national bodies) to influence policy and practice for the benefit of local authorities within the East Midlands.
- Provide support, advice and best practice to local authorities on issues including employee education and training, management practice and development, employee relations, human resource management, and elected Members development.

In the past year, the Executive Board has directed a number of consultation responses and lobbying work as follows:

- Directed a co-ordinated lobby for the electrification of the Midland Mainline, including parliamentary and ministerial meetings.
- Provided a response on the National Planning Policy Framework, and submitted this to the DCLG Select Committee as written evidence for their inquiry into the framework.
- Established a member led group to tackle the issue of affordable housing in the East Midlands.
- Written to the Prime Minister on the issue of the awarding of the Thameslink contract and the implications for the city of Derby and wider region.
- Obtained a detailed response from DWP and DCLG on issues arising from Welfare Reform measures.
- Successfully backed the campaign to win funding for the dualling of the A453 alongside other economically important road projects in the East Midlands.
- Gained agreement from DCLG to look again at whether European funding can be used to support rural broadband for business initiatives.

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Executive-Board> or contact [stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

2011/12 was a year of great change for the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP), as it became fully integrated into EMC. Government funding for the partnership ended in March 2011, but through underspends the Board was able to develop a £3.5million legacy programme which runs until March 2013, funding a range of regional and local projects fostering innovation, collaboration and efficiencies.



In addition, the Board has revised its approach, continuing to oversee the legacy programme, but increasingly focusing on a strategic oversight of sector improvement, including the new approaches to children's and adult services improvement.

### 2011-13 Legacy Programme

The Board approved local projects on a range of themes including housing, adult social care, ICT and property rationalisation. In addition, substantial funding has been awarded to regional projects tackling issues such as achieving efficiencies in children's and adults social care, how cloud computing can support local authority activity, and member development. All projects are regularly monitored by the Board, which this year has established a cycle of project presentations to provide assurance and share good practice.

### Supporting Councils Through Change

In addition, the Board has used its legacy programme and its contacts to take forward support to councils on a number of topical issues:

- 20 councils have benefited from an income generation review.
- A new performance management benchmarking network established with work commissioned to establish common measures to support councils.
- Work initiated on Welfare Reform, with funding agreed for an event to help councils prepare for the changes.
- A major report 'New Ways of Working' commissioned and produced, supported by a well attended event for members and officers showcasing regional good practice. The report is available at <http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/regional-programmes-legacy/>
- A small 'Business Transformation' fund was established giving small grants to local authorities tackling improvements or taking forward radical change.

### Future Work

The EM IEP is working ever more closely with the LGA on issues such as an early warning system for councils in difficulty, member development programmes and the LG Inform system. In addition, members will continue to develop their strategic role, and identify

how EM IEP can support councils both individually and collectively to meet the challenges presented to local government in 2012/13.

For more information, please visit <http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/home/> or contact [jan.sensier@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:jan.sensier@emcouncils.gov.uk).

## Regional Employers' Board and Regional Joint Council

The Regional Employer's Board provides opportunities for Members to discuss key developments in legislation and national terms and conditions that have implications for local authorities as employers. The major issues this year have included:

- National pay negotiations in local government within the challenging financial climate.
- Reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- Workforce implications of transferring public health responsibilities to local government.
- Review of the Working Time Directive by European Social Partners.
- Implementation of the Agency Workers Regulations.

The Board has been fully informed on these developments and, importantly, has been able to inform decision-making. This has taken place through meetings, consultation exercises, and links with national and European negotiators through EMC in its role as the region's Employers' Organisation.

The Board forms the Employers' Side of the Regional Joint Council, enabling dialogue between local authorities and unions on these important topics. Despite industrial action in September 2011, employee relations through the Council remain positive, with parties able to understand the implications and perspectives at a more local level.

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Regional-Employers-Board> or contact [sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## Strategic Migration Partnership

The Strategic Migration Partnership leads the joint work of Local Authorities in relation to migration issues. During 2011/12 it has progressed the following work areas, amongst others:

- Changes in funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision.
- The impact in the East Midlands of the transition of service users in the West Midlands, from local authority to private provider accommodation.
- Identifying costs associated with supporting families and single adults who have no recourse to public funds.
- Roma integration.
- Changes to welfare and benefits entitlements.
- UKBA COMPASS accommodation provision for asylum seekers.

The Board also launched a Migration Health Toolkit to support practitioners working with migrants with health needs.

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Strategic-Migration-Partnership> or contact [sarah.short@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.short@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## Policy and Infrastructure

### Transport

EMC worked with member councils to secure funding for regional transport priorities, such as the widening of the A453 between the M1 and Nottingham, and the A14 Kettering Bypass. In November 2011, EMC and the South Yorkshire PTE launched a new 'prospectus' for the upgrade and electrification of the Midland Main Line at the House of Commons, and subsequently supported Nicky Morgan MP in lobbying ministers and mobilising support in Parliament. EMC also responded to the Government's HS2 consultation and continues to work with member councils, the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd on proposals for a new high speed rail link serving the East Midlands.

*"The report commissioned by East Midlands Councils and South Yorkshire passenger transport executive entitled The Case for Upgrading and Electrifying the Midland Main Line is very impressive. It highlights significant potential economic, environmental and financial benefits from electrification and the other upgrades..."*

*Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Rail Minister, speaking in the House of Commons*

### Housing

EMC lobbied to increase support for the delivery of affordable housing. EMC worked with the Homes and Communities Agency and the National Housing Federation to raise the profile of housing need in the region and to identify opportunities to promote investment. EMC's Executive Board agreed to establish a small member-led 'task and finish group' in order to help councils make the best of investment and enabling support and maximise local delivery.

### Planning

EMC worked with member councils to make representations to the Government's Draft National Planning Policy Framework - many of which were reflected in the final document. EMC worked with the Planning Advisory Service to develop a package of support to help councils and other public bodies to implement the new 'Duty to Co-operate', available through the PAS web-site: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=2133313>

EMC also teamed up with the regional architecture centre OPUN to offer a package of discounted design support services to member councils.

### Economic Development

EMC has established a well attended network of LEPs operating in the East Midlands and hosted a major seminar on the implementation of the Government's Work Programme as

well as a number of on-line debates on aspects of economic policy. EMC recently hosted a meeting for Town Centre Managers building on the findings of the Portas review.

### **The Future of Local Audit**

In January, EMC facilitated a meeting of Heads of Finance, Treasurers and Audit leads to meet with DCLG officials to discuss the new audit arrangements following the demise of the Audit Commission.

### **Employment Conditions**

EMC has worked closely with the LGA to develop thinking on local government employment issues. EMC hosted a member consultation meeting on any 2012/13 pay award, and has taken soundings on current proposals to streamline pay bargaining. EMC has also helped authorities exchange information on changes to terms and conditions, and through its links with the European employers' organisation (CEEP) has identified potential opportunities for supporting apprenticeships.

### **Welfare Reform**

Following the Executive Board discussion on Welfare Reform, EMC has run two important events for members and officers examining the implications of council tax localisation, and the introduction of the Universal Credit, alongside current changes to the benefit system. These events attracted audiences from across the region, and speakers from DCLG, DWP and the private sector IT providers. A steering group is now being established to provide ongoing support and to monitor the impact of the changes, helping councils to find solutions to issues and to plan for implementation.

*"The best event on Welfare Reform I have attended"* Delegate from EMC's "The Clock is Ticking" event held on 14 June 2012.

### **Health**

During 2011/12 EMC put in place a range of support to assist local authorities with the transition of public health responsibilities to local government and to ensure effective identification of the key issues. EMC represented local government at the Public Health and Local Government Transition Network and brought upper-tier Chief Executives together with senior Department of Health representatives in a series of timely discussions to help lay the groundwork for these significant changes.

### **Policy Briefing**

EMC introduced a weekly Policy Briefing in May 2011, providing a clear summary of key policy developments in all of the above areas, and more. The Policy Briefing provides up-to-the minute analysis and information on issues that affect councils in the East Midlands in a succinct and accessible form throughout the year.

*"Short and sweet with sharp focus on key issues with links for any greater detail"*

*"I think the range of information is really beneficial and useful"*

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Home> or contact [andrew.pritchard@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.pritchard@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## Member Services

### East Midlands Jobs

East Midlands Jobs launched in early March 2011. It is a one-stop website that can help job-seekers look and apply for local authority jobs in the East Midlands. East Midlands Jobs has been well received by local authorities and job seekers, receiving 3.8 million page views and averaging 40,000 visits per month, saving participating local authorities thousands of pounds of advertising costs.

For further details go to <https://www.eastmidlandsjobs.org.uk/>

### Member Development

EMC worked with members and member development officers to design, deliver and co-ordinate member development support. This included:

- 22 local authorities subscribed to regional briefing events for Councillors
- 12 councils achieved charter status
- 150 hours of member development were provided to Councillors from Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire in 40 separate sessions
- 75 Members and Officers have taken part in our network over the last year and shared learning on induction programmes, localism, political mentoring schemes, on-line skills portal and the opportunities from the EM IEP funded councillor programmes.
- Over 130 Councillors were provided with learning and development plans to support their councillor roles.
- Member briefings on climate change delivered in 9 local authorities

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

We continued to support local authority Environmental Health Officers for the third consecutive year by delivering the popular CPD series "5 Pack + 1". We also introduced a similar programme of low-cost CPD for local authority planners and other development professionals. Each programme delivers 6 learning and development seminars tackling issues of relevance to each discipline.

Feedback from both CPD programmes has been highly positive:

*"Amazing value for money."*

*"Absolutely excellent with national speakers."*

*"Workshops were a very helpful learning method allowing greater understanding of the practical issues/tensions within the localism debate."*

*"The event provides a good opportunity for networking with other planners in the field."*

The new low-cost CPD network for council planners delivered over 3,000 hours of training over the course of the year.

*"The seminar cost £30 – do I think its good value – yes very good value! A very well organised stimulating seminar (gives others a run for their money) over all quality, professionalism and venue facilities is equal to if not better than those offering more expensive seminars and training courses/days! Well done keep up the good work!"*

*"Very well attended event and a great alternative to the more expensive central London events"*

## Training

EMC has a wide-ranging training programme aimed at helping councils learn from each other, and save money through central procurement. Courses run this year include Leading Complex and Organisational Change, Report Writing, Performance Management and Managing Absence at Work.

During 2011/12 East Midlands Councils also helped local authorities to improve through Action Learning, developing their own internal capacity and bringing together officers from different authorities to solve their work-based problems in Action Learning Sets.

We helped several teams across different authorities to work together more effectively through team development workshops. We also designed and delivered a modular training programme for Assistant HR Officers.

EMC also established a Strategic Housing Network, delivered a programme of support for strategic housing authorities including networking, training and associated opportunities, and pioneered a joint training programme with the Chartered Institute of Housing which is subsidised for EMC members.

## Consultancy

We have supported authorities with a range of HR and management consultancy projects including;

- Recruitment assessment centres and related psychometric testing.
- Restructuring advice and support.
- Disciplinary and grievance investigations support.
- Outplacement services for both individuals and groups.
- Transformation programme and external challenge review.

*"I would like to say a big thank you for all of your help with the assessment centre...the programme went very well and helped to inform panel decisions"*

*"I'm so pleased you can assist - I have great regard for you and your work and so know that the support will be right"*

*"Thanks to you for the excellent report you have produced and for turning this around so quickly."*

Through the Planning Support Service, EMC has provided specialist support to a number of member councils on matters including a major wind turbine application, a site-based Supplementary Planning Document and analysing evidence for local plan Examinations.

### **HR advice**

East Midlands Councils gathers information from local authorities on a range of pay and workforce issues enabling authorities to benchmark policies and to work collaboratively on common issues and share best practice. Over the past 12 months, EMC issued 99 information and research bulletins on a variety of topics.

East Midlands Councils also provides a HR Advice Line. Over the past 12 months, we have responded to 54 requests for advice on a range of HR topics including redundancy, restructuring, pay, pay policy statements and pensions.

### **Savings**

EMC has worked with local authorities across the region to collaborate and realise significant savings on the cost of an On-Line HR Information System annual licence. This has saved £4,230 each for authorities that have signed up for a 3 year deal; for a 2 year deal £2,720 and for a one year deal £1,250.

### **Networks and events**

We have run a number of networks providing individual and corporate learning, helping authorities tackle challenges and exchange good practice. EMC's networks include Safety, Scrutiny, CRB, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Performance Management, Learning Organisational Development, and Spatial Planners amongst others.

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Local-Government-Services> or contact [sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## A Focus on Europe

In a changing landscape, EMC has focused on ensuring a strong local authority voice in the new arrangements for managing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme in the East Midlands, as well as exploring other avenues of European funding and influence that could benefit our members.

### **ERDF Local Management Committee (LMC)**

EMC secured strong Local Authority member representation on this committee, which we have used to make the case for the use of ERDF funds to fund rural broadband infrastructure for businesses gaining agreement from DCLG to review the position. EMC also held an online debate on the East Midlands 2007-13 ERDF Programme on EMC's Local Economic Growth Network Knowledge Hub.

### **Priority Axis 2 Districts**

EMC established an active network of representatives of the 12 Local Authorities eligible for targeted funding under Priority Axis 2 (ERDF), bringing them into direct and co-ordinated contact with the ERDF Programme Delivery Team.

### **Into the Future**

EMC responded to the March 2012 BIS consultation on the next round of European structural funds which will run from 2014-2020. EMC is lobbying for greater integration of funds, a strong local authority voice, and sub-national governance. More detailed consultation will take place in 2012/13, and EMC will work with members to produce a co-ordinated and robust response.

EMC has been actively exploring opportunities to secure European funding for the East Midlands. Our Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Board has approved in principle a bid to the European Investment Bank's ELENA fund for investment in carbon reduction schemes. This is being taken forward in 2012/13. EMC also worked with Glenis Willmott, MEP, to promote the work of the Platform for Health and Well Being which is hosted by EMC.

For more information, please visit <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Europe> or contact [stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## East Midlands Platform on Food, Physical Activity & Health



EMC has hosted the East Midlands Platform on Food, Physical Activity & Health since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The Platform was established in 2010 by the regional team at the Department of Health and by March 2011 had 33 members. The Platform aims to reduce levels of obesity and overweight through the collective efforts of its member organisations which all make a commitment to undertake specific actions to improve health.

During 2011/12 membership increased to 46. A wide range of organisations participated, from large corporations to small charities and community interest companies, local authorities, small and medium sized businesses, universities and health care providers. Commitments included programmes to support staff wellbeing including 'Eat Well, Work Well' – a successful programme piloted by Platform member organisations. Some members offered services to other members as part of their commitment including free mentoring, evaluation, training and weight management programmes. There were a range of community based projects including schemes to help people learn to grow and cook nutritious healthy food, and community based physical activity and sports schemes, workplace walking and exercise challenges.

The Platform hosted three meetings during 2011/12, providing opportunities to share good practice, learn and develop new partnerships and programmes. The Platform also provided free seminars on subjects identified by members such as 'Eat Well, Work Well'. Professor Dame Carol Black, the national advisor for work and health joined Platform members at their February 2012 meeting, where she updated members on the latest policy and solicited their views and experiences on different approaches.

The Platform signed up to the Public Health Responsibility Deal during 2011/12. It was one of the first network organisations to do so, making a pledge on physical activity.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 the name changed to Platform for Health & Wellbeing.

More information about the Platform and its members can be found at [www.regionalplatform.org.uk](http://www.regionalplatform.org.uk) or contact [trish.crowson@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:trish.crowson@emcouncils.gov.uk)

## Climate East Midlands

2011/12 was an exceptionally busy year for Climate East Midlands due to the delivery of a Climate Change Skills Programme worth almost £1m and funded by DCLG via East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. This was also the year that the Partnership moved its three full time staff to East Midlands Councils Offices and integrated its work with East Midlands Councils. This means that support on climate change to local authorities is now part of the core service provided to EMC member councils.

### Climate Change Skills Programme

Through the Skills Programme, Climate East Midlands was able to provide a range of parallel training programmes provided by leading experts to help councils and their communities cut costs and carbon and build their resilience to extreme weather. The beneficiaries included elected members, planners, energy managers, schools and climate friendly communities. A large number of events took place across the East Midlands providing face to face learning and networking opportunities, including dissemination events in March. The material from all these events is available online and is being augmented with other outputs that include case studies, guidance documents and online tools that are all freely available.

### Funding

Alongside this, the Partnership also delivered its first piece of income generating commissioned work to councils in the North East, and began work on a £1m European bid (ELENA) to provide technical support to sustainable energy projects.

Despite the tough economic times, this challenging policy agenda remains a central government priority. With proactive support from EMC and Climate East Midlands, local authorities and their partners in the East Midlands are rising to the challenge.



For more information, please visit [www.climate-em.org.uk](http://www.climate-em.org.uk) or contact [mike.peverill@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:mike.peverill@emcouncils.gov.uk) or 01664 502 628.

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