

## POLICY BRIEFING FOR EMC MEMBERS: 13 JANUARY 2012

### Planning & Transport (Officer Contact: [andrew.pritchard@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.pritchard@emcouncils.gov.uk))

Transport Secretary Justine Greening has confirmed Britain will have a **national high speed rail network** providing new capacity and faster journeys across the country from 2026. The announcement focused on the detail of the route between London and Birmingham, part of which passes through Northamptonshire. Changes announced to the route include a wider curve around a number of listed buildings in South Northamptonshire (around Edgcote). The Government has also confirmed its intention to extend the line from Birmingham to both Manchester and Leeds - with intermediate stations in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire. The Secretary of State will receive a report on the line of route and potential station locations in March 2012, and is likely to start initial public consultation in the late autumn - with a final decision due in 2014 and completion by 2033. The press release is available [here](#) with further details available on the [HS2 website](#).

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, has announced proposals to make it easier for people to fly flags of their choice without facing restrictions. Under the new rules, people will be able to fly a wider range of flags including the flags of football and cricket clubs or town and village flags without seeking express permission. Further details of the proposals, which are intended to boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion are available [here](#).

The Department for Transport has published responses to the **government's consultation about policy on roads classification, the primary route network and the strategic road network**. It explains how the government is modifying its proposals to take into account the ideas and concerns raised during the consultation. The document is available on [DfT's website](#).

A reminder that EMC will be holding the next **Planning Low Cost CPD** event 'Specialisms in Planning' on the 23 February 2012 in Melton Mowbray. For more information, please contact [moira.hunt@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:moira.hunt@emcouncils.gov.uk).

### Housing (Officer Contact: [cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk))

Housing Minister Grant Shapps has announced **proposals to criminalise the abuse of social homes** - such as unlawful subletting and key-selling - with a possible two year jail sentence. He said the plans could free up thousands of homes for housing waiting lists. Further details are available [here](#).

Communities Minister Andrew Stunell has announced the successful bids for **£60 million of funding to provide new authorised pitches as well as better facilities for travellers on official sites**. Initially a total of 33 providers, of which 18 are local authorities and 15 housing associations, will receive allocations for 617 new and 167 improved pitches at a total cost of £47m. In the East Midlands, Harborough, Leicester City, Melton and North West Leicestershire are set to benefit by £4.6m to provide 56 new or additional pitches. Details are available [here](#).

### Public Health (Officer Contact: [cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk))

DCMS have published a **new Youth Sport Strategy**, designed to create a sporting habit for life amongst young people. The Strategy, which can be downloaded [here](#), is being launched as part of the sporting legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

### Employers' Issues (Officer Contact: [sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk))

Plans to **reform local government pension schemes** have been rejected by trade union Unite putting the provisional pre-Christmas agreement into doubt. Two other major unions, Unison and the GMB, are still in talks. Further details are available [here](#). EMC is monitoring the situation on behalf of East Midlands' local authorities. Contact [sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk).

A reminder that the next **Environmental Health 5 Pack + 1** low cost CPD seminar 'Public Health' will be held on 8 March 2011 in Melton Mowbray. For further details please contact [moira.hunt@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:moira.hunt@emcouncils.gov.uk).

### Climate Change & Sustainable Development (Officer Contact: [mike.peverill@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:mike.peverill@emcouncils.gov.uk))

A reminder that Climate East Midlands is running a series of **masterclasses for planners** in conjunction with the Carbon Trust. The next event 'Planning for Wind' is being held on 18 January in Daventry. Further events are being held on 'Combined Heat and Power' (20 January, Leicester) and 'Delivery and Energy Service Companies' (23 February, Nottingham). Further information is available from [anne.gayfer@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:anne.gayfer@emcouncils.gov.uk).

### Local Government Policy: (Officer Contact: [stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk))

As part of the **Libraries Development Initiative**, the LGA and Arts Council England is inviting LGA Member

councils to attend a free libraries seminar on 29 February 2012 at Leeds Town Hall. The seminar, aimed at elected members, will look at the vision for a modern library service; how this can be created; and what models and tools are available. For more information or to book a place contact [cts@local.gov.uk](mailto:cts@local.gov.uk).

A reminder that the **East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership** (EMSMP) was formed in 2007 to consider the impact of migration on the region by linking with member organisations on economic migration, asylum and refugee issues. The current funding period ends in March 2012 and new funding arrangements will be in place for the financial year 2012/13. In order to ensure the EMSMP continues to respond effectively to the changing patterns of migration in the East Midlands we would like you to take ten minutes to respond to a **survey** by clicking [here](#).

The Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd, has launched the new **Community First endowment**, which aims to raise £150 million to be invested to secure the future of local community projects in England. The Government will pay in up to £50 million, giving 50p for every £1 raised from individual, corporate and philanthropic donors. With Gift Aid tax relief, this will create a pot worth in excess of £150 million. The money will be invested and the return, expected to be up to £12 million per year, will be used to provide grants to local community and social action projects from 2015 onwards. Further information is available [here](#).

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Caroline Spelman, has announced her intention to appoint **new members to the National Park Authorities** including one appointment to the Peak District National Park Authority. The appointments, which reflect the national importance placed on these bodies, will normally commence in May 2012, and are initially for up to four years. Further details and an application form are available [here](#). The closing date is noon Monday 13 February 2012.

DCLG are consulting on options for changing the data collection for **land use change statistics**, proposals for a rationalised collection of **housing data** from local authorities and ceasing publication of **departmental statistics at regional level**. The consultation, which closes on 2 April 2012, is available [here](#).

Member Authorities are invited to attend the next **full meeting of East Midlands Councils**, to be held at 10am on 2 February 2012 at Leicestershire County Council. Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government, will provide the keynote address. Further details will be included in next week's Policy Brief. Contact [stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk) for further information.

A reminder that EMC on behalf of DCLG is holding a workshop on 24th January 2012 at Nottinghamshire County Council on the **Future of Local Audit**. The meeting is aimed at Directors of Finance/Treasurers and/or portfolio holders for finance. The meeting follows the announcement of the government's decision to abolish the Audit Commission in August 2010, and its subsequent consultation on its proposals for a new local public audit framework. This workshop will discuss these proposals and the practicalities of making them work. The workshop will be presented by policy leads from DCLG's Future of Local Audit team, and will include sessions by the National Audit Office and the Audit Commission. Invitations to the meeting have gone out to Chief Executives and Directors of Finance or equivalents. Contact [alison.neal@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:alison.neal@emcouncils.gov.uk) for further information.

## Other EMC Events

**Managing Absence at Work - 8 March 2012:** East Midlands Councils is holding a half-day training session on managing absence at work. This half day course includes information on the 'Fit Note' and how it will impact upon Absence Management. The course uses examples and case studies to contextualise delegate learning.

**Report Writing - 28 March 2012:** East Midlands Councils is holding a one day report writing skills seminar taking place on 28 March 2012 at our offices in Melton Mowbray.

For further information on these events or to book your place please use this link to [EMC's website](#) or contact [lisa.bushell@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.bushell@emcouncils.gov.uk).

## EMC Management Group

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