

POLICY BRIEFING FOR EMC MEMBERS: 20 JANUARY 2012

Meeting of East Midlands Councils: 2 February 2012



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. Members will also receive presentations from Cllr Andrew Lewer, Deputy Group Leader and LGA Deputy Chairman on the LGA Business Plan and Cllr Shona Johnstone, Vice Chair, LGA Economy and Transport Board and Ron Lynch, Regional Director, Institute of Directors on economic growth. The full agenda for the meeting will shortly be available on [EMC's website](#).

Contact stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk for further information.

Planning & Transport (Officer Contact: andrew.pritchard@emcouncils.gov.uk)

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) will be holding a series of free events across England to discuss the new **'duty to co-operate' on strategic planning issues**, which came into force as part of the Localism Act 2010. The programme includes: **28 Feb in Leicester**; and **9 March in London (councillor's event)**. Speakers will include representatives from DCLG & PINS, as well as from PAS and councils with experiences to share. Further details and booking forms are available from the PAS web-site: www.pas.gov.uk

Housebuilding in the East Midlands has been boosted following the announcement from housebuilders Crest Nicholson that an agreement has been signed for the 120-acre Monskmoor Farm site on the edge of Daventry. The planning permission includes 1,000 houses and flats, with supporting facilities including a school, shops and leisure facilities. Further details are available [here](#).

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.

Housing (Officer Contact: cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk)

EMC's new housing courses for 2012 are now available to book via our website, starting with a timely session on **Welfare Reforms and Housing Benefit Changes** on 16th March. We have held prices at the subsidised 2011 rate of £115 for EMC Members. For details of all of the courses or to book a place please click [here](#).

Economic Development, Skills & Education (Officer Contact: peter.williams@emcouncils.gov.uk)

DCLG have published an updated and refreshed toolkit aimed at helping local communities, councils, businesses and civil society organisations to navigate their way through the many tools, options, powers, flexibilities and incentives available to them to shape plans for their area and their community. **'Regeneration to enable growth: A toolkit supporting community-led regeneration'** is available [here](#).

Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, has confirmed his intention to scrap the 'satisfactory' judgment for **school inspections**. The move is designed to tackle the number of coasting schools that have remained stubbornly 'satisfactory' over a number of inspections. The proposals, which will be subject to consultation, would mean that any school that does not provide a good standard of education will be given a new 'requires improvement' grade. Further details are available from [Ofsted](#).

Public Health (Officer Contact: cathy.jones@emcouncils.gov.uk)

The LGA has published **transition guidance on public health workforce matters**. The guidance builds on the earlier Public Health HR Concordat and is intended primarily for the use of HR specialists in councils which will be receiving staff. A copy has been sent directly to council leaders, and is also available [here](#).

DCLG have announced local authority allocations of the £20 million additional funding for the **Disabled Facilities Grant** to help more people live as comfortably and independently as possible in their own homes. Further details and a link to individual authorities' allocations are available [here](#).

The LGA is organising a conference looking at **Physical activity: the changing shape of public health** (March 13, London). This conference aims to help councils get people active through understanding the new public health and physical activity landscape. Details of the Conference, which is free for LGA members, are available [here](#).

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

DECC has laid before Parliament draft licence modifications to the **Feed – in Tariffs scheme** (FITs) which, pending the final outcome of current legal challenge process, make provision for a reduced tariff rate (from 1 April 2012 onwards) for new solar PV installations. Further details are available [from DECC](#).

A reminder that Climate East Midlands is running a series of **Skills programme events** around planning, decentralised energy, implementation support, schools, community skills and hydropower, through to March 2012. A flyer with further details is available on [Climate East Midlands' website](#).

Local Government Policy: (Officer Contact: stuart.young@emcouncils.gov.uk)

The **East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Board** met on 18 January to discuss the progress of the programme, the wider improvement agenda and the future strategic role of the partnership. The Board also took presentations from Kettering Borough Council on their innovative approach to budget setting, and on the Climate Change Skills Programme. Papers will shortly be available [here](#).

The Ministry of Justice has produced updated **national standards to define acceptable behavior for bailiffs**. Councils and other authorities who employ bailiffs will be asked to change the way they are regulated following a consultation in the Spring. Further details are available [here](#).

Defra are consulting on amending the powers in **section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990**, which sets out the penalties which local authorities may apply to householders who present their waste incorrectly for collection. The amendments will abolish the criminal offence currently provided for in Section 46 and replace it with a new civil sanction. Details of the consultation, which is open until 9 March 2012, are available [here](#).

Communities and Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles, attended the **Local Government Summit 2012** on 16 January. The transcript of his address, in which he talks about localism and growth, enterprise zones and the Growing Places Fund, is available [here](#).

The Government has published its response to the consultation seeking views to its proposed approach for giving powers to **elected mayors in the 12 major English cities** (including Nottingham). The response is available [here](#).

The UK Border Agency have announced that G4S Regional Management (UK and I) Ltd. is the preferred bidder for the East Midlands for the **COMPASS programme**. Currently the contract covers initial and dispersed accommodation for asylum seekers and transport. The project is working with the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to support effective planning and management of the transition of service users from current contracts to COMPASS contracts to ensure minimal disruption. Please follow [this link](#) to read more about the process.

Other EMC Events

EMC is facilitating the delivery of a programme of 6 low cost **knowledge based events for councillors**, on a range of important topical issues such as health, planning, community budgets, localism, and climate change. This initiative is part funded by the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The cost to cover all 6 events for each participating authority is £500.00+VAT. This would enable each authority to access 2 places on each of the 6 events being offered making the cost per councillor £42. For further information, please contact lisa.bushell@emcouncils.gov.uk.

Last chance to book: Through the work of the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, East Midlands Councils is facilitating a **meeting of the performance management leads** across all councils in the region, hosted by Rushcliffe Borough Council, on 26 January. Details of the event and how to book are available [here](#).

EMC Management Group

Chair: Cllr David Parsons CBE david.parsons@leics.gov.uk	Labour Group: Cllr Robert Parker Cllr.parker@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Vice Chair: Cllr Jon Collins Jon.collins@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Lib Dem Group: Cllr Fiona Martin MBE fiona.martin@e-lindsey.gov.uk
Vice Chair: Cllr Neil Clarke Cllr.JClarke@rushcliffe.gov.uk	Independent Group: Executive Mayor Tony Egginton tegginton@mansfield.gov.uk
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