



A weekly round up of local government news in the East Midlands brought to you by
East Midlands Councils

Top items this week

2 AUGUST 2024



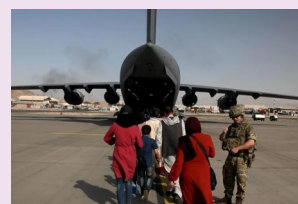
East Midlands Leaders call
for investment in regional
rail



Chancellor outlines plans
on public expenditure



Consultation on reforms
to the National Planning
Policy Framework



Separated Afghan families
to be reunited

EAST MIDLANDS LEADERS CALL FOR INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL RAIL

On Tuesday, Leaders across the East Midlands came together to call for a long-term plan for improving regional rail services following a report from Transport for the East Midlands that shines a spotlight on the opportunities for growth and improvement.

The report, titled “A Platform for Growth”, highlights the need to develop a more competitive rail offer in the East Midlands, improve performance standards, and for an East Midlands voice within the new Great British Railways.

Chair of Transport for the East Midlands, Sir Peter Soulsby, was joined at Chesterfield Station by Claire Ward, Mayor of the East Midlands, Leader of Chesterfield Borough Council, Tricia Gilby, and Managing Director of East Midlands Railway, Will Rogers.

The full report can be found here:

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CHANCELLOR OUTLINES PLANS ON PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

On Monday, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, addressed the House of Commons and set out the government’s plans on public expenditure, identifying a list of significant funding shortfalls which is said to leave an immediate debt of £22bn.

A series of cuts were announced, including the Restoring Your Railway (RYR) Programme being axed in its entirety, including the reintroduction of passenger services on the Barrow Hill line between Chesterfield and Sheffield, and the Ivanhoe line between Leicester and Burton.

The Chancellor also ended universal winter fuel payments, which are currently paid to all pensions. Those not receiving pension credits or other means tested benefits will not receive winter fuel payments from this year onwards.

A-Level reforms announced by the previous government were also scrapped, in addition to a series of road infrastructure projects including the A303 Stonehenge project.

The Chancellor announced that she would be “accepting in full” the recommendations of the public sector pay bodies to give pay rises to doctors, teachers and other public sector workers.

The new governments first budget is set to be announced on 30 October 2024.

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TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

The DfT has announced that an internal review of DfT's capital spend portfolio will be commissioned to support a long-term strategy for transport.

This review aims to support the development of DfT's new long-term strategy for transport, developing a modern and integrated network and ensuring that transport infrastructure can be delivered efficiently and on time.

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NEW TOWNS TASKFORCE

On Wednesday, The Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, asked Sir Michael Lyons to be the Chair of an independent New Towns Taskforce, supported by housing economist Dame Kate Barker as Deputy Chair.

The group will present a final shortlist of recommendations on appropriate locations for new or expanded towns to ministers within 12 months.

The programme of new towns will create communities of at least 10,000 new homes each and will be governed by a 'New Towns Code' – a set of rules that developers will have to meet to make sure new towns are well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places where people want to live.

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CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED REFORMS TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

On 30 July, MHCLG launched a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, detailed wider changes to the planning system, and announced new flexibilities for councils and housing associations.

In the East Midlands, the proposals would see our housing targets increased from 20,793 to 27,387, a 31% increase. Recent delivery in the region has been just under 23,000 pa.

A breakdown of the proposed figures in the East Midlands per authority can be found here: [Impact of New Standard Method for Calculating Local Housing Need](#).

MHCLG is also seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

The consultation closes on 24 September.

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REFORMS ANNOUNCED TO CLEAR BACKLOG IN LOCAL AUDIT IN ENGLAND

This week, the Minister of State for MHCLG Jim McMahon MP, laid a written ministerial statement in Parliament setting out proposals to tackle the local audit backlog in England.

The proposals, which are supported by all key local audit organisations, include setting a statutory 'backstop' date of 13 December 2024 to clear the backlog of unaudited accounts up to and including Financial Year 2022/23.

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The proposed legislation would include five further backstop dates up to and including financial year 2027/28 to allow assurance to be rebuilt over several audit cycles.

SEPARATED AFGHAN FAMILIES TO BE REUNITED

The Home Office has this week confirmed the expansion of the UK's flagship Afghan resettlement scheme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Afghans who were evacuated from Kabul to the UK in August 2021 under Pathway 1 of the ACRS who travelled without their immediate family members can now refer their closest family members. This includes children who were under the age of 18 at the time of the evacuation, and spouses or partners, for relocation to the UK. Children evacuated without their parents will also be able to make a referral to relocate their parents or siblings here, and can be supported to complete their application by a trusted adult.

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UPCOMING EMC

MIGRATION TRAINING

IOM UK: Afghan Information Session – two parts

Part one - Geography, Society, Current Events and Services

Tuesday 10 September 2024 - 10am—12pm - Virtual via Zoom

This session's content will focus primarily on the geography and history of Afghanistan, as well as Afghan's experiences in conflict. The session will also look at the services (including education and health care) Afghans may be used to and their expectations around accessing those services in Afghanistan.

[BOOK NOW](#)

Part two - Cultural Norms, Family and Social Life

Wednesday 11 September - 10am—12pm - Virtual via Zoom

This session's content will focus primarily on Afghan cultural norms, practices, family, and social life.

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Vicarious Trauma Training

Monday 9 September 2024 - 9am—4pm - Virtual Via Zoom

This session aims to support the development of skills in the prevention and management of burnout and vicarious traumatization while providing assistance to the Refugee & Asylum Seekers (RAS) population, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

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EMC Leadership

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Vice Chair: Cllr Sarah Russell
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Labour Group: Cllr Jewel Miah
Liberal Democrat Group: Cllr David Bill MBE
Independent Group: Cllr Matthew Relf
Executive Director: Stuart Young



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