



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

Top items this week



New National Planning Policy Framework



Webinar on the Devolution White Paper



Government Pilot to Extend Move On Period for Asylum Seekers

13 DECEMBER 2024



EMC Regional Scrutiny Network

NEW NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK SEES THE RETURN OF HOUSING TARGETS

EMC has produced an analysis of the impact of the new housing figures on LPAs in the East Midlands. There are a number of significant changes included within the revised housing allocations and EMC will provide further information in a NPPF briefing note to be shared early in the New Year.

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The government has announced significant planning reforms, including ‘mandatory’ housing targets for councils, aiming to deliver 1.5 million new homes by 2029. Councils across country will now be required to build 370,000 homes annually, with higher targets set for areas facing severe affordability issues. The reforms also introduce changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), encouraging development on brownfield sites first and reviewing "grey belt" land for potential use while ensuring greenbelt protections remain strict. Additionally, developers will face new “golden rules,” requiring infrastructure and affordable housing as part of any new projects. To support the changes, councils will receive £100 million in funding to hire staff and conduct technical studies, with an aim to recruit an additional 300 planning officers nationwide. The government has also introduced measures like a New Homes Accelerator and increased housing guarantees to unblock stalled developments and support small-scale builders. A consultation will take place next month to explore further updates to the planning system, aiming to simplify processes and ensure local authorities adopt up-to-date plans within clear timelines.

WEBINAR ON THE DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER

Councillor Ben Bradley hosted a webinar yesterday on The Devolution White Paper, and the proposed restructuring of Local Government. He was joined by Claire Ward, the Labour Mayor of the East Midlands, Professor Will Rossiter, Economics Professor at NTU and head of the Nottingham Business School, and Keane Duncan, former Council Leader and now Transport Cabinet Member at the North Yorkshire Council. The discussions explored the potential impact of the proposed plans, how it may affect the East Midlands and speculated on what may happen next. East Midlands Councils will continue to keep our membership updated once the Devolution White Paper is published, and will confirm details of a Devolution and Planning summit scheduled for March 2025.

PILOT TO EXTEND MOVE ON PERIOD FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

It was recently announced that the Government will pilot an extension to the move on period provided to newly granted asylum seekers. Previously those receiving a positive decision would have received 28 days' notice prior to support being withdrawn by the Home Office. From the 9 December the Home Office will return to providing notice at 56 days. This temporary extension of the Move On period from 28 to 56 days, is a change the East Midlands Councils Strategic Migration Partnership has lobbied for and is considered a positive amendment for councils, communities, and people seeking asylum.

Cllr Alex Dale, Chair of the Regional Migration Board, said: *"As a Regional Migration Board, we have continued to lobby government on the need to extend the notice period from 28 to 56 days, so welcome this announcement. By providing an extension this will allow local authorities, statutory partners, and the voluntary sector sufficient time to better provide support to those exiting the asylum system into accommodation, training and employment ensuring individuals are in a better position to move on with their lives".*

With limited capacity in housing and support available the extension alleviates some pressures faced by Local Authorities. This move aligns the asylum Move On period with existing timelines for other individuals and families at risk of homelessness and it is believed the pilot will remain in place until at least June 2025. It is believed that this is a pilot will support local authorities with the transition to eVisas and assist with pressures whilst the asylum backlog is cleared.

EMC SMP will continue to support in ensuring the process is clear for both councils and for those receiving a decision on their asylum claim. We will also continue to lobby the Home Office to apply the 56 day move-on period on a more permanent basis.

AFGHAN WOMEN SHARE STORIES THROUGH ART EXHIBITION IN LOUGHBOROUGH

An art exhibition was held at Fearon Hall in Loughborough, showcasing crafts created by Afghan women temporarily housed at Garat's Hay. The women are part of a group of over 200 people who worked with British Armed Forces during the conflict in Afghanistan and are now rebuilding their lives in the UK. The exhibition was the result of a health and wellbeing programme led by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and local organisations to support the group.

EMC REGIONAL SCRUTINY NETWORK

At the East Midlands Regional Scrutiny Network today, Mel Stevens, CEX of the Centre for Governance Scrutiny (CfGS) led a discussion on scrutinising external partners and organisations enabling the councillors and officers present to learn valuable insights and share top tips and practice. For information on the Scrutiny Network dates and topics in 2025 please contact Lisa Butterfill: lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk

TRANSPORT FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS

The next Transport for the East Midlands board meeting will be taking place on Monday 16 December. Agenda items include the DfT National Transport Strategy and the Multi-Year Comprehensive Spending Review as well as updates from East Midlands Railway and National Highways on activity in the region. For more information contact info@emcouncils.gov.uk.

EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Martin Hill OBE
Vice Chair: Cllr Sarah Russell
Vice Chair: Cllr Tricia Gilby
Conservative Group: Cllr Phil King
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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