



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

Top items this week



County Councils requests to postpone local elections



Northamptonshire councils seek to form South Midlands Authority



East Midlands Regional Pay Briefing

10 JANUARY 2025



EMC to support creation of sub-regional ESOL Networks

COUNTY COUNCILS REQUESTS TO POSTPONE LOCAL ELECTIONS

Leicestershire County Council and Derbyshire County Council have requested to postpone local elections in May to join the government’s devolution priority programme. Nottinghamshire County Council has confirmed its intentions to hold elections. It is understood that Lincolnshire CC has written to minister requesting fast track reorganisation but without seeking to delay local elections due to the establishment of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority in the coming months. Leicestershire County Council has said it has no detailed proposals on the shape of future council boundaries but envisaged a system where there were two unitary councils - one for the city of Leicester with extended boundaries and one covering the wider county.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCILS SEEK TO FORM SOUTH MIDLANDS AUTHORITY

North and West Northamptonshire Councils have agreed to pursue proposals to partner with other authorities in the South Midlands area in a bid to join the Government’s ‘priority programme’ for devolution, with the submission of an expression of interest to establish a new strategic mayoral authority covering West Northamptonshire, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and North Northamptonshire.

The authorities have a history of working together as SEMLEP and through the former MKSM Growth Area.

Luton and Milton Keynes indicated a preference to go ahead with the devolution deal without Northamptonshire, excluding to mention both authorities in their devolution bids.

EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PAY BRIEFING

East Midlands Councils will be hosting a regional pay consultation briefing on Thursday **13th February 2025 from 10.00am -12.00 noon**. The meeting will take place virtually on MS Teams. The briefing provides an opportunity for senior officers and lead Members to meet with the national negotiators to discuss the claims from the joint trade unions and to inform the National Employers’ response. Chief Executives, Finance Directors, HR Directors and Leaders are particularly encouraged to attend.

The format will be as follows and you will receive two Teams links:

- 10.00am – 10.15am: pre-meeting to provide an opportunity to hear from Trade Unions about their claim
- 10.15am-12 noon: Pay Briefing from the LGA

To book a place please email mila.pereira@emcouncils.gov.uk.

HOUSING AND PLANNING REFORMS: 'BUILDING THE FIELD OF DREAMS'

East Midlands Councils' Director of Policy and Infrastructure, Andrew Pritchard, has offered further reflections to inform our thinking on proposed planning reforms, housing targets and the challenges of housing delivery. The full article can be found on our website:

Like many of its predecessors, this Government believes that the key to solving the housing crisis lies in reforming the planning system.

All we have to do is to make the system produce more planning permissions at a faster rate, and housing delivery will rise to meet need – and everyone will be happy.

It's a version of the 'Field of Dreams': consent them, and they will come.

[READ MORE](#)

EMC TO SUPPORT CREATION OF SUB-REGIONAL ESOL NETWORKS

East Midlands Councils is working with Migrant English Support Hub to bring together stakeholders from across the regions to form sub-regional English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) networks. These Networks will act as a forum to help shape the future of ESOL delivery in the region and tailor provision to local needs.

The first network meeting will take place in Northamptonshire later this month, with sessions in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire planned for February. Network meetings for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire will be announced soon. Find out more and book to attend here:

[BOOK NOW](#)

EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Back by popular demand, EMC are holding another Employment Law Update facilitated by Darren Newman.

The session will take place on 5th March 2025 via MS Teams and will run from 10.00am-12.30pm. The update will offer Darren's pragmatic advice and interpretation of the main developments in employment law and implications for councils.

[BOOK NOW](#)

CONSULTATION ON LOCAL AUDIT REFORM

On 18 December 2024, MHCLG published the Local Audit Reform Strategy committing to a series of measures to help fix the local audit system. This includes the establishment of a statutory and independent Local Audit Office (LAO), with five strategic responsibilities – coordinating the system, contract management, ownership of the Code of Audit Practice, quality oversight and reporting.

The government is also consulting on a number of specific proposals as part of this strategy, including: potential additional functions of an LAO, simplifying financial reporting requirements, enhancing capacity in the audit sector and strengthening relationships between local bodies and their auditor.

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