

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

Top items this week

14 MARCH 2025



Planning and Infrastructure Bill Introduced to Parliament



Government turns down controversial rail freight hub



Plans for LGR in Derbyshire



Council Support for Afghan Resettlement

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL INTRODUCED TO PARLIAMENT

This week the government introduced the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to Parliament, aiming to accelerate housebuilding and key infrastructure projects across the UK.

The Bill includes measures to speed up planning decisions, remove barriers to developments such as roads, railway lines, and wind farms, and support economic growth, connectivity, and energy security.

The reforms are part of a broader strategy, including updates to the National Planning Policy Framework, aiming to deliver 1.5 million homes and 150 major infrastructure projects. The Bill also includes provisions to support communities near new electricity transmission infrastructure, with households receiving up to £2,500 over ten years off their energy bills.

Following the introduction of the Bill, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner MP wrote to council leaders and Metro Mayors in England, outlining the next phase of planning reforms and highlighting the government's commitment to improving the planning process.

EMCC will be holding an event providing insight into the implications of the Devolution White Paper and the Government's Planning Reform Agenda in the East Midlands on Thursday 5 June 2025 in Leicester. More information about this session will be shared soon.

[READ MORE](#)

GOVERNMENT TURNS DOWN CONTROVERSIAL RAIL FREIGHT HUB

The transport secretary has refused planning permission for the £750 million Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange in Leicestershire. The proposed development by Tritax Symmetry would have been located near junction 2 of the M69 and the Leicester–Nuneaton line, providing a rail freight link with Felixstowe and creating an estimated 8,000 jobs.

While acknowledging the 'compelling need' for the interchange, the transport secretary cited concerns over the impact of 775m trains on the level crossing at Narborough and the capacity of nearby motorway junctions to handle additional lorry traffic. Leicestershire County Council welcomed the decision, while Tritax Symmetry has expressed disappointment and is considering its next steps, including seeking legal advice.

[READ MORE](#)

EMCCA APPOINTS PERMANENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

EMCCA has announced the appointment of three permanent Executive Directors, following the recent appointment of its first Chief Executive, Amy Harhoff.

The new senior team members are Damien Dacey as Executive Director of Strategy and Inclusive Growth, Edward Highfield as Executive Director of Place, and Richard Williams as Executive Director of Resources.

[READ MORE](#)

PLANS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DERBYSHIRE

Councils within Derbyshire are outlining their proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. Leaders of Derby City Council and the eight borough and district councils have set out two options. Both options propose a northern unitary council including High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, and Bolsover, with Amber Valley either joining the north or the south. The southern unitary council would include Derby City, South Derbyshire, and Erewash.

Derbyshire County Council has put forward an alternative proposal for a single unitary authority. Consultation will seek views from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders before final proposals are developed.

LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

TUESDAY 25 MARCH | 6:00PM—7:30PM

In collaboration with RESET, EMC is hosting a Community Sponsorship event in Derby. Taking place at Reach Welcome Church, the event will raise awareness of the Community Sponsorship scheme, which enables local groups to support refugee families into their communities.

Community Sponsorship provides an opportunity for groups to ‘sponsor’ a family and support their integration for a successful future in the UK.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about how Community Sponsorship works and hear from Reset about their work.

Reset is funded by the Home Office to provide training and support to community sponsor groups across the UK. Reset provides advice, guidance and support to groups throughout the entire journey of sponsorship, from application through to supporting a resettled family once they have arrived.

This event is open to everyone who wants to understand how Community Sponsorship works and how individuals/community groups could get involved.

Further details, including the event agenda can be found here:

[READ MORE](#)

COMMUNITIES FOR AFGHANS PROJECT: GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILS

This week, MHCLG published guidance on the roles and responsibilities of councils in the Communities for Afghans project. This information does not replace or contradict their statutory duties or responsibilities. This guidance applies to councils supporting the Communities for Afghans scheme in the UK.

MHCLG has also updated the documents setting out policy for phase two of the ‘Communities for Afghans’ scheme, a sponsorship route for individuals from the Afghan Resettlement Programme.

[READ MORE](#)

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 Ashley Baxter

Executive Director: Stuart Young



East Midlands Councils

Pera Business Park

Nottingham Road

Melton Mowbray

Leicestershire

LE13 0PB