



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

## Top items this week

18 JULY 2025



Government lifts  
safeguarding of former  
HS2 route



Nottingham City Council to  
receive Government  
'innovation squad'



English Devolution &  
Community  
Empowerment Bill



East Midlands Finalists for  
2025 APSE Awards

## GOVERNMENT LIFTS SAFEGUARDING OF FORMER HS2 ROUTE THROUGH THE EAST MIDLANDS

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander MP has lifted the safeguarding of the former HS2 Eastern Leg route from Birmingham to Leeds - formally terminating the project in the East Midlands after 16 years. As such, HS2 Ltd will no longer be obliged to object to planning applications along the route. Disposal of properties acquired by HS2 Ltd will start in 2026. Safeguarding of the HS2 route between Birmingham and Manchester remains pending a further announcement on Northern Powerhouse Rail later this year.

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## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL TO RECEIVE GOVERNMENT 'INNOVATION SQUAD'

Nottingham City Council has been named as one of nine councils across England to receive an 'innovation squad' as part of the Government's test, learn and grow programme. The initiative, announced by Cabinet Office Minister Georgia Gould, pairs councils with Whitehall policy officials, technology specialists and other experts to trial new approaches to tackling local challenges. The scheme builds on earlier pilots in Manchester, Liverpool, Essex and Sheffield, where innovation squads tested ideas such as improving take-up of family hub services and developing a data-led platform to manage temporary accommodation. Alongside Nottingham, other councils set to benefit in this round include Barnsley, Wakefield, Manchester, Liverpool, Sandwell, Northumberland, Essex and Plymouth.

## ENGLISH DEVOLUTION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BILL INTRODUCED

The Government has introduced the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to Parliament, aiming to deepen and widen devolution across England. The Bill will formally establish "Strategic Authorities" — covering Combined Authorities, Combined County Authorities and the Greater London Authority — under a statutory devolution framework. This framework sets out consistent powers and responsibilities, with scope for Strategic Authorities to take on greater functions over time. The Bill also includes reforms to local government governance and audit, introduces a duty on councils to ensure effective neighbourhood governance, and creates a new Community Right to Buy to help protect valued local assets.

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## HOME OFFICE EXTEND 'MOVE ON' PERIOD FOR ASYLUM SUPPORT LEAVERS TO 56 DAYS – PILOT EXTENDED UNTIL DECEMBER 2025

On 9 December 2024, the Home Office announced an increase to the 'Move On' period for newly granted refugees, from 28 to 56 days from the point the asylum decision letter is issued. Originally expected to run as a pilot measure until June 2025, the Home Office has confirmed that the measure will remain in place as a pilot until December 2025. This will allow the impact of the pilot to be fully assessed and maintain support for councils and newly granted refugees during this period of increased decision making.

The independent evaluation of 'Move On' is ongoing and due to conclude later this summer. The evaluation will inform future decisions on the 'Move On' initiatives including the extended grace period.

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### EAST MIDLANDS FINALISTS IN 2025 APSE AWARDS

Congratulations to Derby City Council, Bassetlaw District Council, South Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and the South and East Lincolnshire Councils partnership for being announced as finalists for the 2025 APSE Awards.

**Derby City Council:** Best Building and Housing initiative Finalist

**Bassetlaw District Council:** Best Community and Neighbourhood initiative (inc. Community Safety) Finalist

**South and East Lincolnshire Councils:** Best Community and Neighbourhood initiative (inc. Community Safety) Finalist

**South Kesteven District Council:** Best Service Team of the Year: Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Finalist

**West Lindsey District Council:** Best Service Team of the Year: Sports, Leisure and Cultural service Finalist

The winners will be announced at the APSE Annual Charity Awards Dinner, in aid of Parkinson's UK, on Thursday 11 September 2025 at the Glasgow Marriott Hotel. Wishing you all the best of luck!

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### EMC COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

#### CYBER SECURITY – STAY SAFE ONLINE!

East Midlands Councils, working collaboratively with the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU), is hosting a free webinar for Councillors on cyber security. This one-hour session has been developed for Councillors in the East Midlands to provide practical advice and information to help keep you safe online. Previous attendees have rated this briefing as informative and excellent, not only in raising their own awareness but in the practical advice and guidance they can use to signpost in their communities too. There are two upcoming dates available for this online training - Thursday 31 July from 1pm - 2pm or Tuesday 16 September from 7pm - 8pm.

[BOOK NOW](#)

#### EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Sean Matthews  
Vice Chair: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin  
Vice Chair: Cllr Tricia Gilby  
Conservative Group: Cllr Phil King  
Labour Group: Cllr Jewel Miah  
Independent Group: Cllr Ashley Baxter  
Lib Dem Group: Cllr Gale Waller  
Reform UK Group: Cllr Martin Griffiths  
Executive Director: Stuart Young



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