East Midlands Councils

POLICY BRIEF

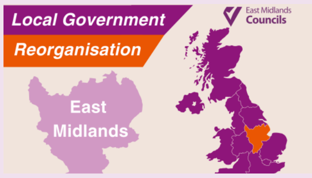
A weekly round up of local government news in the East Midlands brought to you by East Midlands Councils

Top items this week

28 NOVEMBER 2025

Lincoln rail uplift welcomed with high ambitions for future

ILM Level 7 Strategic Leadership and Management



LGR Deadline Day: Proposals across the East Midlands

Budget 2025: Key updates for Local Government in the East Midlands

Lincoln rail uplift welcomed as leaders set out high ambitions for future connectivity

A new report on Lincoln's rail network has been published by East Midlands Councils on behalf of TfEM and in partnership with the GLCCA. The analysis welcomes the planned uplift to two trains an hour between Lincoln and Nottingham from December 2025, noting that it reflects years of local campaigning.

The report highlights rising rail demand in the city, with station usage up nearly five per cent since 2019 despite national decline. It stresses the need to protect the upcoming uplift as wider timetable changes take place, and calls for continued progress on journey times, signalling upgrades and long-standing constraints such as the Newark Flat Crossing.

The report also notes that previous gains on London services remain vulnerable without a long-term plan for East Coast Main Line capacity. Leaders from TfEM, GLCCA and EMC underline the importance of building on current progress to deliver a reliable and frequent service that keeps pace with Lincoln's growth.

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ILM Level 7 Strategic Leadership and Management – final places for 2026 intake

A small number of places remain on EMC's ILM Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Leadership and Management, running from 28 January to 13 October 2026.

The programme is designed for current and aspiring senior leaders in the public sector who are looking to strengthen their strategic leadership capability and gain a nationally recognised postgraduate-level qualification.

The course focuses on practical leadership development, reflective practice and the skills needed to lead complex services and deliver improved outcomes for communities.

Further information and booking details are available here:

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New Government Digital Service: Local

Last week, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and Government Digital Service (GDS) launched GDS Local, a new specialist team designed to strengthen collaboration between central and local government and improve digital public services for communities.

GDS local aims to help councils make everyday public services simpler, faster, and more accessible, and will work with councils to help them scale innovation and share best practices.

DSIT and GDS also announced the rollout of the Government Digital and Data Hub – an online space providing training, networking and career resources for public sector digital and data professionals.

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LGR Deadline Day – Proposals submitted across the East Midlands

Today is the last day in which councils can submit final proposals for local government reorganisation. These proposals must show how councils in an area have worked together to reach a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views. In the East Midlands:

Derbyshire:

- Derbyshire County Council has approved submission of a proposal for a single unitary authority covering Derbyshire and Derby City.
- The eight district councils plus Derby City are submitting alternative proposals for two Derbyshire unitaries, structured on a north and south split. Within the two-unitary proposal, councils have indicated different preferences for how the Amber Valley area should be allocated:
  - Derby City, Chesterfield Borough, Erewash Borough and High Peak Borough support Option B1, which divides Amber Valley between the two new authorities.
  - North East Derbyshire District, Bolsover District and Derbyshire Dales District support Option 1A, a similar north–south structure but placing more of Amber Valley in the north.
  - South Derbyshire District Council supports Option B, which places the whole Amber Valley area in the south.
  - Amber Valley Borough Council supports Option A, which places the entire district within the new North Derbyshire authority.

Nottinghamshire:

- Option 1b, backed by Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe, creates a Greater Nottingham unitary (Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Gedling) and a Nottinghamshire unitary covering the remaining districts.
- Option 1e, supported by Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood, proposes a north–south split, with a northern authority (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood) and a southern authority (Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe).
- The Nottingham City boundary review option, submitted by Nottingham City Council, proposes an expanded city unitary incorporating parts of neighbouring districts, with a second unitary covering the rest of the county.

Leicestershire:

- Leicester City Council is promoting a boundary-expansion model, creating two unitaries with an enlarged city area.
- Leicestershire County Council is submitting a proposal for a single Leicestershire and Rutland unitary, with the city unchanged.
- The district councils and Rutland are advancing a three-unitary model, structured as City, North, and South.

Lincolnshire:

- Lincolnshire County Council is submitting the Your Lincolnshire proposal, which creates a single county-wide unitary covering the existing county and district councils.
- North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils are submitting the BEST4GreaterLincolnshire proposal, which would create:
  - a Southern Lincolnshire Unitary (North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland), and
  - a Central and Coastal Lincolnshire Unitary (City of Lincoln, West Lindsey, East Lindsey, Boston).
  - Alongside the existing northern unitaries.
- Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland District Councils are submitting the A Greater Lincolnshire for All proposal, which would create:
  - Northern - North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, City of Lincoln, West Lindsey
  - Southern - Boston, South Holland, South Kesteven, East Lindsey, North Kesteven.
- City of Lincoln Council is submitting a proposal for:
  - an expanded Lincoln City Unitary (City of Lincoln and wards from North Kesteven and West Lindsey)
  - a Rural Lincolnshire Unitary covering the remaining county districts (West Lindsey, East Lindsey, Boston, South Holland, North Kesteven and South Kesteven).

Budget 2025 : key points for local government

On Wednesday, the Chancellor delivered the 2025 Autumn Budget. The summary below highlights the measures most relevant to councils and partners in the East Midlands.

Local government finance and welfare

- A High Value Council Tax Surcharge will apply to homes over £2 million from April 2028, with revenue used to support local services.
- The government will publish SEND reforms early next year. When the DSG Statutory Override ends in March 2028, councils will not be required to use general funds to cover historic deficits.
- Mayors and Strategic Authorities, including the East Midlands Mayor and the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor, will gain the power to introduce an overnight visitor levy, subject to consultation on its design.
- A business rates revaluation will take effect in April 2026 with accompanying reliefs for eligible sectors, alongside a call for evidence on how the system affects investment decisions.
- A national review of homelessness services, including temporary accommodation models, will be undertaken.

Growth, devolution and the East Midlands

- The new £902 million Local Growth Fund for Mayoral Strategic Authorities in the North and Midlands means both the EMCCA and GLCCA will be eligible for a share, linked to their respective Local Growth Plans.
- The Mayoral Revolving Growth Fund has been launched for a small number of named Mayoral areas, but the East Midlands and Greater Lincolnshire are not included in this initial group.
- Government reaffirmed the Great British Railways headquarters in Derby, positioning it within wider regional transport and manufacturing priorities.
- The Budget references more than £2 billion already committed to transport improvements in the East Midlands through existing multi-year programmes.
- EMCCA and GLCCA will be able to join the national learning cohort linked to new place based budget pilots, although neither is a pilot area.
- All Mayoral areas in the North and Midlands, including EMCCA and GLCCA, will be able to bid for around £7 billion through the successor to the Affordable Homes Programme.

Planning, infrastructure and public services

- £48 million over three years will increase national planning capacity, including recruitment of additional planners, which councils in the region can access through central programmes.
- Government plans to increase spending on local roads maintenance to more than £2 billion per year by 2029 to 2030, contributing to long-term highways funding available nationally.
- Plans for 250 Neighbourhood Health Centres continue, with local areas able to engage depending on programme timelines.

Transport, net zero and migration

- Regulated rail fares will be frozen for one year to March 2027.
- A new Electric Vehicle Duty will apply from 2028, alongside £100 million for local authority chargepoint capability.
- The government plans to reduce reliance on hotels for asylum accommodation and recover £74 million from suppliers, with further detail to follow.

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