

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

Top items this week



East Midlands MPs
respond to Northern
Powerhouse Rail



East Midlands Councils:
Low-cost CPD for Planners



Applications open for
UK Town of Culture
competition

16 JANUARY 2026



EMC Learning and
Development Events

East Midlands MPs respond to Northern Powerhouse Rail

This week, the Government set out a new Northern Growth Strategy, including Northern Powerhouse Rail, a major strategic rail programme designed to improve connectivity between key economic centres in the North. In parliament, two East Midlands MPs, James Naish, MP for Rushcliffe and Jonathan Davies, MP for Mid Derbyshire—Chair and Vice Chair of the East Midlands APPG posed questions to the Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander. Jonathan Davies MP asked the SOS to: “not lose sight of the benefits of electrifying the Midland Mainline... something that will drive significant growth... and benefit the country as a whole.” James Naish MP highlighted that transport spend per head in the East Midlands has fallen to 54% of the UK average, with rail funding at barely 40%, requesting that the SOS “once more looks at electrification of the Midland Mainline, which will have an immediate economic impact and can be delivered in this parliament.”

In response to these questions, Heidi Alexander, SOS for Transport, said: “we did have to make some difficult decisions as part of the spending review on electrification, but we are continuing to keep the potential for full electrification of the Midland Mainline under review.”

Northern Powerhouse Rail, along with other recent transport announcements will be discussed at the Transport for the East Midlands board on Monday 9 March 2026.

[READ MORE](#)

East Midlands Councils: Low-cost CPD for Planners

Yesterday, local authority Planners attended a low cost CPD event at Melton Borough Council. Delegates heard thought provoking presentations from two housebuilders on the appeals process and undertook a practical workshop to share ideas and get a better understanding of what makes a deliverable housing site. If you would like to find out more please contact lisa.bushell@emcouncils.gov.uk.

Reminder: Consultation on a new set of planning reforms to the NPPF

On 16 December 2025, MHCLG launched a consultation seeking views on a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A draft NPPF has been published alongside this consultation and both documents should be read together. The consultation closes on 10 March.

[READ MORE](#)

Applications open for UK Town of Culture competition

Towns across the country can now apply to enter the UK Town of Culture competition, which aims to shine a spotlight on the unique contributions that towns make. Bidding places have until 31 March to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI), making the case for why their town is special..

[READ MORE](#)

East Midlands Challenge

The East Midlands Challenge returns on 29 April 2026, offering a practical, high-pressure development experience for future leaders across local government, health, housing and emergency services.

It is a full-day, immersive development exercise that places teams in realistic, time-pressured scenarios involving service planning, competing priorities and customer needs. Teams work through complex, realistic scenarios that test resilience, decision-making and political awareness.

We encourage organisations to ensure they make the most of our early bird discount before it comes to an end on 30 January 2026. You only need to register your intention to submit a team by this date and the discount will still apply; information on team participants can be provided later.

[READ MORE](#)

National Local Government Recruitment Campaign:

Make a Difference, Work for Your Local Council

The LGA and East Midlands Councils, through its role as the Regional Employers' Organisation, have launched this year's National Recruitment Campaign to promote careers in local government and highlighting how rewarding working in the sector can be.

The campaign, funded by UK Government, will run from 5 January 2026 for six weeks until 15 February 2026, and will be promoted across multiple media channels including outdoor billboards, radio, social media, podcast adverts and many more.

This is a great opportunity for councils to promote their existing roles, and encourage interest in the sector locally. The LGA has developed a [free toolkit](#) to help councils promote the campaign in their area.

[READ MORE](#)

EMC Learning and Development Events

Supporting leadership and management development needs in the lead up to LGR is a key priority and EMC are providing a range of ILM accredited courses to facilitate this. We will be advertising further ILM sessions in the next couple of months.

- [ILM3 Award in Leadership and Management - Cohort 1 - Starting 4 February 2026](#)
- [ILM3 Award in Leadership and Management - Cohort 2 - Starting 12 March 2026](#)

This is a 6-day programme designed for those currently managing or aspiring to lead multidisciplinary teams, particularly within the context of local government, with cross-functional collaboration. It is ideally suited to officers and managers who work through influence and partnerships to deliver outcomes.

- [ILM 7 Certificate in Executive Coaching and Mentoring](#)

This 9 day programme is designed for those involved in Executive Coaching and Mentoring, who wish to gain an internationally recognised qualification on the National Qualification Framework at Level 7 (assessed as similar to Masters Level).

EMC Leadership

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