

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

## Top items this week

10 APRIL 2026



Best Start Family hubs



Rollout of new  
neighbourhood health  
centres



Better Connected  
Transport Strategy



EMC Councillor  
Development Programme

## Best Start Family hubs

Last week, the Department for Education announced that over 200 Best Start Family Hubs will open. These form the first wave of up to 1,000 hubs across all councils by the end of 2028, with 800 expected to be operating as Best Start Family Hubs by the end of April.

The programme builds on the legacy of Sure Start, combining face-to-face and digital support, strong partnerships with early years settings, and better use of existing community partners and spaces.

[READ MORE](#)

## Rollout of new neighbourhood health centres

Last month, the Government announced the rolling out of the first 27 neighbourhood health centres, providing more care closer to home. Once completed, patients will immediately be able to access a greater range of health services from these centres – all under one roof and closer to their homes – including urgent treatment, GP and pharmacy services.

In time, centres will also include wider services like debt advice, employment and family support and other voluntary sector support, and will be open 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.

The 27 centres will be open by 2027 and are the first of 50 neighbourhood health centres backed by a total of £200 million in government investment to upgrade existing buildings.

In the East Midlands, centres include: Hinckley Health Centre and Long Eaton Health Centre.

[READ MORE](#)

## Better Connected Transport Strategy

Tap-and-go contactless travel is set to expand across England as the government grants local leaders new powers to introduce joined-up payment systems similar to those in London, Liverpool and Nottingham. The measures form part of the Better Connected national transport strategy, which includes more than 40 fully funded commitments aimed at making everyday journeys simpler, cheaper and more reliable. The strategy also introduces real-time bus tracking through Google Maps, an expanded National Parking Platform and a £6 million 'Mini Switzerland' pilot in the Peak District to improve rural transport links.

Local authorities will gain greater flexibility, long-term funding and technical support to build integrated networks that keep fares down and improve passenger experience. Examples such as Nottingham and Derby's Ride app highlight the benefits of coordinated transport planning. The government is also launching £40 million for digital transport innovation and publishing new guidance to help areas deliver better-connected, growth-boosting transport systems.

[READ MORE](#)

## EMC Councillor Development Programme

East Midlands Councils provides a comprehensive, value for money, councillor development programme for member councils in the East Midlands, which is updated throughout the year to compliment your councils in-house provision. We have a range of sessions currently available for members, including:

### **Making an Impact at Meetings | 27th May | 6 – 8 pm | Virtual**

This practical workshop aims to strengthen councillors' confidence, influence, and effectiveness in meetings by developing practical questioning and communication techniques that enhance decision-making, scrutiny, and collaboration.

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **The Role of the Civic Head | 8th June | 10.00am – 3.00pm | Melton Borough Council**

Our annual interactive workshop aimed at supporting incoming Mayors or Chairs of Council is back by popular demand. This is an insightful and extremely useful opportunity to explore expectations on your role from a range of perspectives, understand the qualities and skills that make a great Civic Head and identify measures of success for your term of office.

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Chairing Skills | 17th June | 6.00pm – 8.30pm | Virtual**

This workshop is suitable for chairs or vice-chairs who will be provided with tips and techniques associated with being a skilled chair of a meeting.

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Overview and Scrutiny – Realising the Potential | 1st July | 6.00pm – 8.00pm | Virtual**

This focused training session helps councillors deepen their understanding of scrutiny's purpose, potential, and practical application as well as tackle common barriers to good practice.

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Overview and Scrutiny – Questioning Techniques | 16th July | 6.00pm – 8.00pm | Virtual**

This focused training session aims to help councillors to consider a range of questioning techniques and develop the skills and knowledge to increase questioning effectiveness across different settings.

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Building resilience through effective time management | 22nd September | 5.00pm – 7.00pm | Virtual**

This practical session will help you enhance personal resilience, wellbeing, and productivity by developing practical strategies to manage stress, use time effectively, and maintain a healthy work–life balance

[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



## East Midlands Councils

Pera Business Park

Nottingham Road

Melton Mowbray

Leicestershire

LE13 0PB