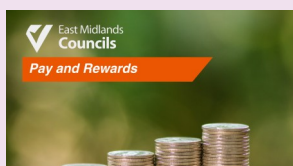


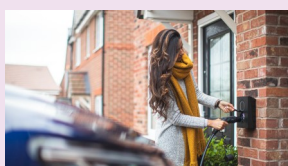
A weekly round up of local government news in the East Midlands brought to you by  
East Midlands Councils

## Top items this week

17 APRIL 2026



Pay and Rewards: Trade Unions respond to pay offer



Renters' Rights Act funding for councils announced



Structures Fund to fix England's bridges, flyovers and tunnels

EMC Councillor Development



## The Role of the Civic Head

EMC Councillor Development Programme

### Pay and Rewards: Trade Unions respond to pay offer

The NJC Trade Union Side has responded to the National Employers' full and final pay offer issued on 24 March, following meetings of each union's national committee last week. UNISON and Unite have both rejected the offer without consulting their wider memberships, while GMB has taken a neutral stance and is consulting its members without recommending either acceptance or rejection. The GMB consultation will close on Friday 22 May.

Following its rejection of the offer, UNISON has informed the National Employers that it will be conducting disaggregated industrial action ballots. These ballots will take place at individual councils, schools, and NJC employer organisations rather than as a single national ballot, although UNISON has not yet confirmed which employers will be included. The ballots will run from 9 July to 6 August. Unite has not yet confirmed its intended next steps following its rejection of the pay offer. We will keep colleagues updated as negotiations continue.

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### Government response on Council Tax modernisation

MHCLG has published the government response to the consultation on modernising the administration of Council Tax. Under the current system, missing one monthly payment means you are liable to pay the entire outstanding sum in a single payment just two weeks later. This will change from next year, with households given 63 days, roughly two months, to settle their bill and a requirement for councils to work with them on a sustainable repayment plan.

Billing for council tax will also be shifted to 12-month payments by default, rather than the current 10 months, and capping the costs which councils can charge when seeking a liability order – how councils recover overdue bills – to £100. Households who continue to wish to pay over 10 months will be able to do so.

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### Councils face new rules for spending pothole funding

The Department for Transport has announced that councils will face new rules on how they spend funding to fix potholes and maintain local roads.

Under the new measures, local highway authorities that fail to demonstrate they are maintaining roads effectively could lose around a third of their £1.6 billion funding for the next year.

The changes will ensure that government funding for local roads is used as intended, with a total of £525 million held back from councils in England unless they are transparent and prove they are performing. Councils must publish reports proving they are spending all of their highways cash purely on road maintenance, showing long-term plans for looking after roads and better training for their highways teams.

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## Renters' Rights Act funding for councils announced

The government has announced that councils in England will receive £41 million to cover costs for new enforcement powers through the Renters' Rights Act.

From 1 May, renters will benefit from greater protections, while councils will get strengthened duties and powers to oversee the government's Renters' Rights Act.

The Secretary of State for MHCLG, Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP, wrote to councils today allocating the new funding of £41 million, in addition to an initial £18 million allocated to councils last autumn.

New powers for councils coming on 1 May include:

- A duty to enforce: councils will be legally obliged to make sure landlords are complying with the new rules that ban old practices like rental bidding wars, discrimination against tenants with children or receiving benefits and 'no-fault' evictions
- Bigger fines: landlords repeatedly breaking the law will now face higher fines of up to £40,000 – up from £30,000.
- Rent Repayment Orders will also be heftier if the rules aren't being followed – going from one year's worth of rent to two years – and tenants can challenge offences going back to two years, up from one year.
- once the union finalises its approach.

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## Structures Fund to fix England's bridges, flyovers and tunnels now open

The government has launched a new Structures Fund, which will provide grant funding to councils to support the capital costs of repairing or replacing local highway structures.

It is open to applications from local highway authorities in England and from Transport for London. Councils are encouraged to submit draft applications by 19 June for early feedback, giving them the opportunity to strengthen proposals before the final deadline of 3 August 2026. A series of webinars will also be held throughout April and May to help councils navigate the process.

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## Government Closes More Asylum Hotels as Large-Scale Sites Expand

The government has closed eleven more asylum hotels across the UK, returning them to local communities as part of its plan to end the use of hotels for housing asylum seekers. More closures are expected in the coming weeks. The Home Office states that this latest round of closures will save taxpayers nearly £65 million a year, contributing to a wider reduction of almost £1 billion in asylum-related costs. The number of hotels used for asylum accommodation has fallen from around 400 at its peak to just under 190, with the number of people housed in hotels down nearly 20% in the past year. As part of the shift away from hotels, the government has begun moving people into larger sites. Ministers say these basic sites will be scaled up further as more hotels close.

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## An inspection of the Home Office's engagement with local authorities in the planning and development of asylum accommodation

Last week, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) commenced an inspection of the Home Office's engagement with councils in the planning and development of asylum accommodation.

The inspection will examine how the Home Office plans, prepares, and engages with councils in developing asylum accommodation, particularly:

- the effectiveness of the Home Office’s engagement strategy in enhancing the responsiveness, consistency and quality of engagement with councils
- local asylum accommodation delivery models and initiatives involving councils
- how the Home Office ensures that accommodation providers fulfil their responsibilities for engagement with councils on delivery of new accommodation
- consideration of the impact on local services and community cohesion during site selection processes.

The inspection will be conducted using the new ICIBI inspection framework. The Chief Inspector anticipates that he will submit his report to the Home Secretary, Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, in August 2026.

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## 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

[BOOK NOW](#)

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

[BOOK NOW](#)

- Chairing Skills | 17th June | 6.00pm – 8.30pm | Virtual

[BOOK NOW](#)

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

[BOOK NOW](#)

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

[BOOK NOW](#)

- Building resilience through effective time management | 22nd September | 5.00pm –

7.00pm | Virtual

[BOOK NOW](#)

Cllr Jane Yates, Leader of Bolsover District Council, and Chair of the Regional Employers’ Board, said: *“It’s a good mix of subjects and being able to join virtually and at times to suit councillors with jobs, as well as council meetings, makes it really accessible.”*

### 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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