



Executive Board Meeting

10.00am, Thursday 11th June 2026

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting 27th March 2026 *
5. Chair's Report *
 - Local Authority Election Results and Regional Political Balance
 - English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act and Local Government Reorganisation
6. Local Authority Workforce and Pay – Regional Employers' Board *
7. Infrastructure and Growth *
8. Asylum and Refugee Resettlement in the East Midlands *
9. Report of Management Group *
10. Any Other Business

*Papers attached



**EAST MIDLANDS COUNCILS EXECUTIVE BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2026**

Present: Cllr Sean Matthews (Chair) – Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Elly Cutkelvin (Vice Chair) – Leicester City Council
Cllr Tricia Gilby (Vice Chair) – Chesterfield Borough Council
Cllr Jewel Miah – Charnwood Borough Council
Cllr Shiraz Khan – Derby City Council
Cllr Craig Leyland – East Lindsey District Council
Cllr Dan Harrison – Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Martin Griffiths – North Northants Council
Cllr Jim Hakewill – North Northants Council
Cllr Neghat Khan – Nottingham City Council
Cllr John Doddy – Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Gale Waller – Rutland County Council
Cllr Christine Wise – Rutland County Council

Stuart Young – East Midlands Councils
Brein Fisher – East Midlands Councils
Sam Maher – East Midlands Councils
Andrew Pritchard – East Midlands Councils
Lisa Hopkins – East Midlands Councils (Minutes)

Apologies: Cllr Jane Yates – Bolsover District Council
Cllr Nadine Peatfield – Derby City Council
Cllr Alan Graves Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Stuart Bray – Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Mayor Andy Abrahams – Mansfield District Council
Cllr Ashley Baxter – South Kesteven District Council

		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	Cllr Sean Matthews welcomed Cllr Christine Wise to the meeting as the new Leader of Rutland County Council.	
2.	Apologies	
2.1	Apologies were received as noted above.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
3.1	None.	
4.	Minutes of Executive Board Meeting held on 10th December 2025	
4.1	The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
5.	Chair's report	
5.1	Cllr Sean Matthews introduced this report.	SY
5.2	Stuart Young updated on the recent developments, including the Government's decision on LGR proposals for Devolution Priority Programme areas.	
5.3	The Secretary of State made the decision upon acceptance that the proposals had met the required criteria.	
5.4	Cllr John Doddy asked if any Unitary proposals put forward were created by the Government.	
5.5	Stuart confirmed the agreed proposals were in response to local propositions, with the exception of Sussex that will be the subject of further consultation.	
5.6	Cllr Craig Leyland confirmed his understanding is that the Sussex proposal was not acceptable to Government.	
5.7	Cllr Dan Harrison expressed concerns in relation to efficiency and scale, and the establishment of smaller unitaries would not support the efficient and effective delivery of services.	

		ACTION
5.8	Cllr Neghat Khan stated that some places will make more efficiency savings than other places.	
5.9	Cllr Martin Griffiths highlighted the transformation and disaggregation of services which is a huge piece of work. There is also a need to create a single culture throughout the council.	
5.10	He also highlighted the confusion with residents around creation of authorities.	
5.11	Cllr Phil King highlighted his concern that appeared to be a lack of firm and consistent criteria.	
5.12	Cllr Craig Leyland expressed his frustration that the Government appears to be diverging from the original brief.	
5.13	Cllr Martin Griffiths offered help to Members as he has been through this process previously.	
5.14	Cllr Matthews confirmed he is happy to write to seek clarification if there was a consensus view of Members.	
5.15	Cllr Tricia Gilby feels the government was clear initially that providing authorities have the capacity to deliver services that are required they do not have to meet 500,000 threshold.	
5.16	Cllr Elly Cutkelvin stated the government set out 5 clear principles initially in relation to finance, growth, housing, transport and the criteria did not solely focus upon population size.	
5.17	Stuart Young summarised the discussion and feels this reflects the diversity on East Midlands Councils. There are a range of views, and suggests local decisions need to be made by local authorities against local priorities. He highlighted the need for local authorities to be 'safe and legal' from day one.	
5.18	Cllr Matthews & Stuart Young to discuss way forward and will take on board members views.	Cllr SM / SY

		ACTION
5.19	Stuart Young confirmed he has spoken to a number of Chief Executives in relation to working through options for EMC moving forward.	SM/SY
5.20	The EM APPG held its AGM meeting last week and has been formally re-established. There has also been a Westminster Hall debate on growth and infrastructure.	
5.21	Stuart Young highlighted the offer to support the holding of political group meetings.	
5.22	<p><u>Resolution</u></p> <p>Members of the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered and commented on recent developments relating to LGR, relating to both process and timetable. ▪ Considered the progress in working with the East Midlands APPG. ▪ Noted the offer to support for the holding of political group meetings, should the Political Group Leader and members wish those to be arranged. 	
6.	Infrastructure & Growth	
6.1	Andrew Pritchard introduced this report and updated Members on the latest developments.	
6.2	He highlighted the forthcoming energy event to members and as part of this work, EMC will consider the potential for further work, with proposals to be brought to a future meeting.	
6.3	The Midlands Connect Board met recently and discussed future proposals for cross-regional activity following the end DfT of funding in March 2027. Further work on a couple of options is to be undertaken and will be brought back to the Midlands Connect Strategic Board meeting in June.	
6.4	There has been an announcement on the roads investment strategy, and two significant schemes in the region have been allocated funding: the A38 Derby junctions and the A46 Newark bypass. However, the start dates have yet to be	

		ACTION
	confirmed. Further lobbying on the A46 may be needed, as the likely start date is after the next General Election.	
6.5	Andrew reported that there are a number of schemes the Government has put in the pipeline for 2031-2036 RIS4.	
6.6	Cllr Sean Matthews expressed disappointed in relation to A1 improvements not being mentioned and suggests that TfEM should lobby for improvements as this is important for this region.	
6.7	Cllr Phil King suggests that there should be a review of TfEM and that it could cover wider infrastructure work as well as transport. In response, Andrew confirmed that a wider review will be undertaken as part of the LGR process.	
6.8	Cllr Gale Waller highlighted that the region will not fully benefit from Oxford/Cambridge Arc due to lack of improvements on the A1.	
6.9	In addition, the lack of water capacity, power supply and improvements to the A1 is impeding development in the East Midlands. A proposed new town on the edge of Lincolnshire is unlikely to see any homes built before 2035 because of insufficient water infrastructure.	
6.10	Cllr John Doddy highlighted the need to understand the short/medium/long term effect on people who have been flooded. There are medical conditions which can accompany serial traumatisation.	
6.11	Stuart Young confirmed in relation to schemes in RIS3 & 4 there is a need to speak to respective combined authorities given their transport role.	
6.12	Andrew confirmed that flood risk remains a significant concern for the region, including its impact on people. The amount of new housing in flood-risk areas is also a concern. It was also confirmed that the RIS programme includes funding for maintenance and renewal, which the region could benefit from.	
6.13	<p><u>Resolution</u></p> <p>Members of the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Endorsed the work of the TfEM Board. 	

		ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered the rest of this report. ▪ Directed officers accordingly. 	
7.	Asylum and Refugee Resettlement in the East Midlands	
7.1	Cllr John Doddy, Chair Regional Migration Board introduced this report which highlights issues that have been discussed at the recent board meeting.	
7.2	Members were updated on the operation of the national mandatory dispersal programme, its local impacts and the work undertaken by EMC in support of local authorities, with 31 councils in the East Midlands included within the dispersal programme.	
7.3	EMC is currently working with a number of councils to address concerns regarding the clustering of asylum seekers in limited areas and type of properties procured by Serco.	
7.4	Cllr Doddy highlighted the positive change from 28 – 42 days move-on period once a person has been given leave to stay and the likely reduction in pressures placed on housing authorities.	
7.5	In relation to the Afghan resettlement programme there may be up to 6,000 people per year being resettled until 2029. However, it is not thought likely that these numbers will be resettled. EMC is working with Government and consulting with member councils to confirm the regional allocation.	
7.6	In relation to UASC, the Home Office have incentivised authorities for taking a child within 4 days.	
7.7	In the East Midlands there were 565 UASC at end of January, alongside 1,533 care leavers. Cllr Doddy confirmed that regional age assessment continues to be a challenge and a 'Merton score is used.	
7.8	Cllr Craig Leyland expressed concerns in relation to HMO concentration and the distortion of local rental markets.	

		ACTION
7.9	<p>Cllr Phil King highlighted the expense of housing in certain areas. Also, in rural areas there is a lack of public transport.</p>	
7.10	<p><u>Resolution</u> Members of the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered the role of East Midlands Councils in the delivery of asylum and refugee resettlement programmes and provided advice in relation to the on-going work of EMC in addressing the concerns of local authorities. ▪ Advised on the impact of the Full Dispersal plan in Local Authority areas including in those areas where numbers exceed agreed targets. ▪ Considered and advised of the impact on Local Authorities of the changes of the move-on period from 28 days to 42 days. ▪ Advised on impact of the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP) and regional allocations and the proposed regional ‘hub and spoke’ model. 	
8.	Local Authority Workforce and Pay – Regional Employers’ Board	
8.1	<p>Sam Maher, introduced this report and updated Members on the key issues currently being considered by the Board.</p>	
8.2	<p>The report includes details on pay, employment law and activity taking place at a regional level.</p>	
8.3	<p>At the recent Regional Joint Council meeting there was a presentation given from North & West Northants on their experiences of LGR. At the next meeting there will be a presentation from the Trade Unions of their perspective.</p>	
8.4	<p>In terms of national pay, national employers have met and made their ‘full and final offer’ of 3.3%. Now awaiting response from employees’ representatives (Trades Unions) on this offer.</p>	
8.5	<p>Cllr Martin Griffiths highlighted the work on pay and conditions for LGR which is huge and advised authorities to start and think about this now.</p>	
8.6	<p><u>Resolution</u> Members of the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered the issues highlighted in the report. 	

		ACTION
9.	Report of Management Group	
9.1	Stuart Young introduced this report and presented the draft budget for formal agreement and also the Business Plan. The Business Plan follows the approach from previous years in terms of individual work areas.	SY/SM
9.2	LGR will be an area of activity and focus over the next 12 months.	
9.3	Stuart Young confirmed West Northants have submitted notice to leave and this will take effect on 31 st March 2025. A number of political representations have been made however there has been no indication they will look to withdraw this notice.	
9.4	<p><u>Resolution</u></p> <p>Members of the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered and endorsed the proposed Business Plan for 2026/27. ▪ Noted the actual financial position for the period to February 2026 and the associated forecast outturn to 31st March 2026. ▪ Considered and endorsed EMC's budget for 2026/27. 	
10.	Any Other Business	
10.1	None.	
11.	Date of Next Meeting	
11.1	Thursday 11 th June 2026.	



Executive Board

11th June 2026

Chair's Report

Cllr Sean Matthews

Summary

The following report provides a summary information on the recent local councils elections, legislative changes and includes a copy of EMC's draft Annual Report.

Recommendation

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

- Consider and advise on the implications of the recent local authority elections and other developments highlighted in this report.
- Consider and endorse the draft Annual Report 2025/26 for presentation at EMC's AGM to be held 9.30am, Friday 3rd July 2026.

1. Summary of Local Authority Election Results

- 1.1 Elections were held across 136 English local authorities, including London boroughs, metropolitan boroughs, county, district and unitary councils.
- 1.2 The only council that had an election in the East Midlands was Lincoln City Council (with one third of its seats up for election)
- 1.3 Nationally, over 5,000 council seats were contested.

Headline results

- 1.4 The 2026 elections represent a major shift in the political landscape, with a move away from the traditional two-party dominance.
- 1.5 In summary, the gains and losses of seats of each main political party are:
- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Reform UK | +1,451 councillors |
| Green Party | +441 councillors |
| Liberal Democrats | +155 councillors |
| Labour | -1,496 councillors |
| Conservatives | -563 councillors |
- 1.6 In terms of the numbers of councils gained or lost:
- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Reform UK | gained 14 councils |
| Labour | lost 38 councils |
| Conservatives | lost 6 councils |
| Lib Dem | gained 1 council |
| Greens | gained 5 councils |
- The number of councils becoming No Overall Control increased by 23.
- 1.7 Overall, it seems that Reform UK made a particular breakthrough in former industrial areas and parts of the Midlands and North. The Green Party made strong gains in urban areas and London, including mayoral wins.
- 1.8 Labour retained control of the City of Lincoln Council. The authority is made up of 33 councillors representing 11 wards. One seat from each ward was up for election. Reform UK made the biggest gain taking four seats, with the Liberal Democrats and Green Party winning one each. Labour lost 3 seats, and the Conservatives lost all three seats they contested.

2. Political Balance

- 2.1 The single council election in Lincoln has a negligible effect on the region's, and therefore EMC's, political balance. At the national level, the LGA remains Labour-led, but Reform UK became the largest political group at the County Councils Network (CCN) and is now set to nominate the new Chair.
- 2.2 A more notable effect on the region's political balance was the withdrawal from EMC membership by West Northants Councils, reducing the share of Reform UK from 29.5% to 28.2%.
- 2.3 The revised political balance for the region excluding West Northamptonshire:

Overall Political Balance	
Reform UK	28.2%
Labour	24.9%
Conservative	23.6%
Liberal Democrats	8.0%
Independents	15.4%

3. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act

- 3.1 The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill completed its passage through Parliament and received Royal Assent to become an Act on 29th April 2026.
- 3.2 The Act introduces 'Strategic Authorities' into law, to make it quicker to devolve powers out from Whitehall. Strategic Authorities with elected Mayors will receive more devolved powers over transport, planning, housing, and economic regeneration.
- 3.3 The Act also establishes Local Scrutiny Committees for mayoral authorities, which will provide scrutiny of local public spending and decision making.
- 3.4 Further measures in the Act include:
- Mandating Mayoral Strategic Authorities to develop local growth plans, aligning regional economic strategies with national policy.
 - A new bespoke duty for Mayors and Strategic Authorities to ensure they formally consider local health improvement and health inequalities when making policy decisions.

- New powers for Mayors to intervene in planning applications of potential strategic importance, make mayoral development orders and charge a mayoral community infrastructure levy on developers.
- The establishment of the Local Audit Office to help manage council finances, ensuring auditing is carried out more efficiently and transparently.
- It should be noted that the Act does not give powers for the Government to impose strategic authorities or mayors upon local areas without that council's explicit consent.

3.5 In effect, while the Government initially sought to impose or expand boundaries to enforce a 'devolution by default' model, in a move away from the old 'negotiated deal' model, the enacted legislation strictly preserves local autonomy by ensuring that the creation of new combined or mayoral strategic authorities remains a voluntary, locally-led process.

3.6 The Act provides the statutory legislative framework for LGR and regional devolution in England that includes the 'power of direction' for the Secretary of State to require councils in two-tier areas to develop and submit LGR proposals alongside 'Section 24 Directions' empowering the Secretary of State to implement financial and administrative controls on outgoing predecessor councils to ensure a smooth transition of assets and services into new unitary authorities.

Local Government Reorganisation

3.7 Councils previously submitted their proposals for LGR, and the final decisions of Government are expected in Summer 2026, before parliamentary recess. Assuming this timetable is kept to, 'shadow council' elections are then planned for in May 2027, with the new unitary councils officially taking over all services on Vesting Day in April 2028.

3.8 It is noted that the new Reform UK leadership in both Suffolk and Essex County Councils have stated their intention to pursue legal action against the Government's reorganisation plans. The impact on the wider LGR process is not clear.

3.9 EMC will continue to support councils throughout the LGR process. As part of this programme, all councillors are invited to attend a fully subsidised policy summit on Thursday 16th July, '*Devolution, LGR and Planning Reform: the Perfect Storm*', in Leicester. The timings of this event should coincide with date of the Government's decision of agreed structures.

4. Draft Annual Report

- 4.1 The draft Annual Report is a summary of our work over the past 12 months and is part of EMC's accountability to the membership for the work we undertake in meeting agreed priorities.
- 4.2 It covers EMC's main programmes and services, including support for the region's investment and growth priorities, development programmes for members and officers, transformation and HR support, EMC's wider role as the Regional Employers' Organisation, and the management of refugee and asylum resettlement programmes.
- 4.3 The draft Annual Report 2024/25 is attached as Appendix 5(a). It summarises key achievements over the year. For example, every member council used at least one EMC service; EMC helped deliver £494,000 in savings for the sector; more than 70 workforce assignments were completed; 2,350 places were taken up on EMC training and development programmes; 12 strategic rail research projects were completed or commissioned; and 270 pieces of immigration legal advice were provided to local authorities.
- 4.4 The draft Annual Report, upon the agreement of Members, will be presented to EMC's AGM to be held at 9.30am, Friday 3rd July 2026, at Leicestershire County Council.

5. Recommendation

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

- 5.1 Consider and advise on the implications of the recent local authority elections and other developments highlighted in this report.
- 5.2 Consider and endorse the draft Annual Report 2025/26 for presentation at EMC's AGM to be held 9.30am, Friday 3rd July 2026.

Cllr Sean Matthews
Chair
East Midlands Councils

EMC ANNUAL REPORT

2025/26

DRAFT

Foreword

This Annual Report provides an overview of our work in delivering the priorities agreed by our members. It reflects the breadth of EMC's programmes and services, including our own activity and that of our partners. Over the past year, we have supported progress on the region's agreed road and rail investment plans and wider growth proposals; assisted councils with the implementation of the revised NPPF and housing delivery; delivered targeted development programmes for members and officers; and continued to provide transformation, HR support, and our wider responsibilities as the Regional Employers' Organisation. We have also advanced the management of key refugee and asylum resettlement programmes.

The year has brought significant political change across the region, requiring EMC to update its governance arrangements and constitution to reflect the new landscape. Despite these changes, members have continued to collaborate constructively on shared priorities.

All councils in membership made use of our discounted services during 2025/26, generating estimated savings of £494,000. EMC delivered an extensive development programme for officers and Members, offering regular policy briefings, skills development sessions, and training events. Participation increased again this year, with 2,465 councillor and officer places taken.

We continued to add value by providing free advice and guidance on employment legislation and national terms and conditions. Demand for employment-related support remained high, with more than 48 separate assignments undertaken for member councils during the year.

EMC also strengthened its partnerships with the region's MPs through the East Midlands All-Party Parliamentary Group, and with the Institution of Civil Engineers (East Midlands), to champion investment in the region's wider economic infrastructure.

In addition, EMC has led work to support councils in engaging with the newly established National Energy Systems Operator (NESO), which is responsible for developing Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESOs). These plans will guide future investment decisions by electricity distribution network operators. As part of this work, EMC convened expert speakers for a seminar for councillors and senior officers in March 2026.

We continue to work closely with local authorities, the Home Office, Ministry of Defence and MHCLG to secure accommodation and wrap-around support for Afghan refugees and those displaced by the war in Ukraine. Alongside these schemes, EMC supports councils in delivering the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) National Transfer Scheme and plays a key role in implementing the Home Office Full Dispersal Model to ensure a more equitable distribution of asylum seekers across the region.

Financially, EMC continues to manage its budget carefully, maintaining a balanced mix of external grants, consultancy income and membership subscriptions. Our financial position remains stable, and we achieved a small surplus from traded services, which will be reinvested to support future activity.

We are grateful to EMC staff, councillors, and officers across the region for their dedication and collaboration. As we look ahead to 2026/27, we remain committed to working closely with colleagues across the East Midlands. Our Business Plan sets out the activity and engagement we will take forward in the year ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Matthews', written over a large, light grey 'DRAFT' watermark.

Cllr Sean Matthews, Chair of East Midlands Councils



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elly Cutkelvin', written over a large, light grey 'DRAFT' watermark.

Cllr Elly Cutkelvin, Vice-Chair of East Midlands Councils



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tricia Gilby', written over a large, light grey 'DRAFT' watermark.

Cllr Tricia Gilby, Vice-Chair of East Midlands Councils

Contents

Our Key Outcomes 2025/26

Our Role and Purpose

What We Do

How we work

Our Finances

Delivering Our Priorities for 2025/26

Communicating our Impact

Our Leadership

Our Staff

DRAFT

Our key outcomes 2025/26

£494,000 Savings delivered for member councils

100% of councils in the East Midlands benefitted from at least one of EMC's services

2,350 Places taken on EMC training and development programmes

1,742 Councillors sent our weekly Policy Brief

12 Rail Research Projects/ Reviews Completed or commissioned

12 HR Research Assignments Completed

68 Requests for HR support received and actioned

1350 Vulnerable refugees resettled in the region

270 separate pieces of immigration legal advice provided to local authorities

14 Organisations and 66 Coaches in EMC's Coaching Network

Our role and purpose

The East Midlands is a region of 5m people, and over the last 10 years, the population has grown above the UK average and in line with London and the South East. The region is a mid-sized but fast-growing business region, home to 368,000 businesses (2024), with a total regional output of approximately £146bn, equivalent to 5.8% of the UK economy.

EMC is a membership body that works on behalf of and is the voice for local government in the region, being proud to represent councils in the East Midlands with membership drawn from our county and unitary councils, 29 district & borough councils and the Peak District National Park Authority.

Our small team of staff work across the range of services and programmes that EMC delivers on behalf of its member councils. Our role is to provide support to all member councils to improve their services and be a strong collective voice for the East Midlands on matters of strategic importance.

Our core objective is to ensure value-added, whether this be through ensuring excellence in the provision of our services and sector-led support or the development of policies and delivering programmes that respond to the needs and priorities of our membership.

The common thread throughout this Annual Report is one of collaboration and partnership working. Working with our membership, through leading and developing regional networks, commissioning research and programmes, sharing learning and best practice, and supporting the development of joint approaches across the region to meet common priorities, we build a stronger, more effective region for the benefit of its councils and their communities.

What we do

Local Government Workforce & Councillor Development

EMC is the statutory Employers' Organisation for local government in the East Midlands. We represent the interests of councils as employers, providing support on workforce issues and development, including councillor development. EMC also provides the Regional Joint Council which brings together employers and trade union representatives and gives support to councils on dispute resolution.

Transport & Growth

EMC supports the work of Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM), which brings together the region's ten local transport authorities to provide collective leadership of strategic transport issues, including through a Rail Collaboration Agreement with Department for Transport for the enhancement of the region's rail services. EMC also supports collective work to maximise the regional economic benefits of transport infrastructure and provides regular updates on key regional metrics on growth and public investment.

Asylum & Refugee Resettlement

EMC, through its Strategic Migration Partnership, co-ordinates collaborative activity on asylum and refugee resettlement. EMC works on behalf of councils in the East Midlands in managing the delivery of national UK Government programmes. These programmes currently include Asylum Dispersal, Ukrainian visa schemes, Afghan and wider UK resettlement schemes, the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and those arriving from Hong Kong with British National (Overseas) status.

Strategic Leadership

EMC provides the secretariat for the East Midlands All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), ensuring that the region's priorities are effectively represented in Westminster. EMC has led council engagement with NESO in the initial work on regional energy strategy development, and with MHCLG on the implications of the revised NPPF. EMC also nominates representatives to the national asylum and resettlement group (ARCSEG), and the Midlands Connect Strategic Boards. In addition, EMC facilitates collaborative work for Children's and Adult Services Lead Members and convenes meetings of all 40 Chief Executives across the region.

How we work

As a small organisation, East Midlands Councils adds value to the work of councils across the region by:

- Evidencing proposals for change and improvement
- Influencing national decisions and decision-makers
- Collaborating across the sector and with national bodies to deliver shared outcomes
- Delivering cost effective services and products on behalf of all our member councils

EMC with its range of roles and responsibilities, has continued to focus its resources where it can add most value, delivering a greater impact through a regional partnership approach and securing funding to deliver against membership priorities.

EMC continues to build effective relationships with Government Departments including with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport, the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, Department for Education and the new Departments for Energy Security and Net Zero, and Business and Trade.

We have also worked with business, health, and voluntary and community sector partners, and play an active and supportive role with wider regional partnerships, in particular with Midlands Connect.

Our Finances

EMC continues to tightly manage its budget, ensuring a balance of income from a combination of annual membership subscriptions, grant funding in support of programme delivery and that from our traded services provided at a discounted rate to our membership. EMC's total income budget for 2026/27 is £1,686,700 and closely aligns to the objectives of our 2026/27 Business Plan.

	Actual	Budget	Budget
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£	£
Income			
Subscriptions	296,200	299,200	305,700
Grants - MHCLG	370,899	619,700	372,300
Contracts - MC - DfT	251,808	295,000	207,500
Grants - Home Office	437,623	588,000	480,000
Earned Income	286,472	301,800	321,200
Total	1,643,002	2,103,700	1,686,700
Expenditure			
Staffing	1,098,735	1,447,500	1,370,500
Members Allowances	11,496	22,000	22,000
Premises	25,840	27,800	28,600
Service Level Agreements	16,700	18,500	18,500
Other Direct Costs	492,070	582,100	246,800
Total	1,644,841	2,097,900	1,686,400
Surplus / (Deficit)	-1,839	5,800	300

Delivering on our priorities for 2025/26

Local Government Workforce & Councillor Development

EMC's work programme was reshaped during 2025/26 to provide support for the sector on the emerging issues of wide-sweeping employment law changes and the workforce implications and learning/development needs arising from LGR. Progress on agreed regional workforce priorities continued: recruitment and retention, improving availability of workforce and pay data to support benchmarking and informed decision-making, supporting positive employee relations, and addressing skills and knowledge through regional programmes. The Regional Joint Council remains a forum for positive employment relations, covering matters such as pay, employee wellbeing, sickness absence, and LGR. It continues to provide an opportunity to work jointly to progress issues of mutual concern. Highlights from 2025/26 include:

- On recruitment, EMC supported the LGA to roll-out a further funded national recruitment campaign, enabling councils in the region to input on the campaign's focus. The regional jobs portal, East Midlands Jobs, continued to be offered to promote councils' vacancies and support the national campaign. EMC delivered a project for a group of councils to collaborate and share resources to promote local government careers with universities and schools, tailoring the national campaign resources to meet local needs.
- EMC facilitated a range of networks on key themes to share information, good practice and advice. Additionally, an online benchmarking system – Infinistats was offered to councils to enable benchmarking of workforce data, including pay, terms and conditions and workforce capacity information, e.g. use of agency workers, sickness absence.
- EMC ensured councils were informed with developments on national pay negotiations for 2025. For the 2026 pay negotiations, EMC hosted the regional pay briefing in February, ensuring councils were able to meet with national negotiators and input their views and understand the issues that would inform 2026 pay offers.

- EMC provided two seminars in November and March attended by 171 delegates to ensure councils were informed and prepared for the wide-sweeping changes introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025. EMC has also supported responses to government consultations, e.g. EMC hosted an event to enable councils to meet with the Department for Health & Social Care as part of a consultation on the introduction of a national negotiating body for adult social care.
- Learning and development programmes have been developed and delivered to ensure officers and councillors have relevant development to meet current and future challenges facing the sector. This includes:
 - Accredited regional leadership and management and coaching and mentoring programmes, along with programmes for senior leadership teams on leading change and transformation.
 - Low-cost Continuing Professional Development programmes for Planning and Environmental Health, which enable learning and experience to be shared across councils. In 2025/2026, the two programmes attracted 1,182 delegates.
 - A councillor development programme and a network for officers and councillors to support scrutiny.
- Design and delivery of a national development programme for the Association of Democratic Services Officers. 27 courses were provided to 441 delegates in 2025/26.
- Throughout the year, EMC has provided additional capacity and support to councils through its free advice and research service and consultancy support on a not-for-profit basis, including coaching, mediation, investigations, restructuring, recruitment and chief executive appraisals.

Transport and Growth

- EMC has continued to focus on opportunities for economic growth, improving strategic infrastructure and securing additional investment. TfEM made a comprehensive submission to the 2025 Spending Review and engaged with local MPs including through the East Midlands APPG to advocate for regional investment. On planning reform, EMC pulled together an East Midlands response to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework consultation.

- Continued to promote the TfEM/Midlands Connect Shared Investment Priorities published in 2024 ([Our Shared Vision for the East Midlands](#)) and continued to promote the regional rail priorities which guide the TfEM/Department for Transport Rail Collaboration Agreement, including the role out of the new Aurora inter-city trains, the ongoing refurbishment of regional and commuter rolling stock, and the doubling of services between Lincoln, Newark & Nottingham which took place from December 2025.
- Published and launched ‘Keeping Pace, enhancing Lincoln’s Rail Connectivity’ jointly with Greater Lincolnshire County Combined Authority: [Keeping Pace: Enhancing Lincoln City’s Rail Connectivity](#), and contributed to the development of EMCCA’s Transport Strategy.
- Procured a comprehensive package of economic and transport evidence to inform a planned refresh of regional transport priorities and development of regional advice for emerging Great British Railways (GBR).
- Completed a joint document with ICE East Midlands highlighting priorities for wider economic infrastructure in the East Midlands: [build-to-grow-emip-report.pdf](#). which was launched in April 2025 and provided the basis for two further joint engagement events through the East Midlands Infrastructure Partnership.
- Worked with NESO and the Midlands Net Zero Hub (hosted by Nottingham City Council) to run a major seminar of Members and senior officers on the future of energy generation and distribution in March 2026 [Have we got the Energy?](#), including publishing an introductory guide on energy issues for Members: [Energy](#).
- Produced regular updates on regional economic performance for the EMC Executive and EMC General Meetings.

Asylum and Refugee Resettlement

East Midlands Councils manages the Strategic Migration Partnership - funded by the Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to co-ordinate activities regarding the dispersal, accommodation and support of asylum seekers, refugees and wider migration issues across the region. During 2025/26, key achievements included:

- EMC has collaborated with Children's Services in the delivery of a regional UASC programme approach which includes increasing UASC placement sufficiency; developing online training for foster carers; publishing a UASC strategic needs analysis; and delivering a mental wellbeing project for former UASC Care Leavers.
- EMC has enhanced the East Midlands Immigration Advice Service offering specialist legal advice and training to Children's Social Care and Legal Teams.
- The Home Office has increased core UASC funding for local authorities as a direct result of EMC policy work, with an additional £2.2m for the region's Children's Services.
- The ongoing delivery of the asylum full dispersal model that provides for a more balanced distribution of asylum seekers across the East Midlands while continuing to address concerns associated with the use of temporary contingency accommodation including the closure of hotels.
- Maintained co-ordination of East Midlands' response to the Ukraine crisis, supporting local authorities to welcome 674 displaced people seeking safety via priority visa routes in 2025/26.
- Led the ongoing delivery of the ARP and UKRS across the region, coordinating the full regional matching process and acting as the primary liaison for local authorities, the Home Office, MHCLG, and the Ministry of Defence.

- Expanded the legacy of EMC's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Programme by collaborating with Migrant English Support Hub to energise sub-regional provider networking, to launch Learning English in the East Midlands (leem.org.uk).

Strategic Leadership

Providing strategic insight to Government on the impact of national policies and initiatives across the East Midlands remained a core focus this year. Working closely with councils and partners across key policy areas, EMC concentrated on:

- Strengthening the collective voice of the region by offering coordinated leadership on issues of strategic importance to Ministers and senior civil servants, including work on flood mitigation and management, and engaging with the newly established National Energy Systems Operator in its development of Regional Energy Strategic Plans.
- Engaging directly with Alex Norris MP, Minister of State for Border Security and Asylum, at an EMC General Meeting to raise regional concerns and explore practical mitigations relating to the delivery of Government asylum programmes.
- Building deeper relationships with locally based Government Departments—such as the Department for Business and Trade, MHCLG, MoD, DfE, DHSC and the UK Health Security Agency—as well as with the region's Mayoral County Combined Authorities, to support alignment of responsibilities and work programmes.
- Working alongside the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce to provide secretariat support to the East Midlands All-Party Parliamentary Group. In addition to completing detailed reviews, EMC supported the Chair and regional MPs in securing and contributing to a Westminster Hall debate on investment and funding levels in the East Midlands and identifying regional priorities for the 2025 Spending Review: [APPG-Report-2025-FINAL-002.pdf](#)

- Delivering a nationally recognised, exemplar programme of sector-led improvement for children’s services through the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance. This included jointly funded regional immigration legal advice and training, and initiatives aimed at increasing foster care capacity.

DRAFT

Refreshed communications

Throughout 2025/26, EMC has continued to support councils through a period of sustained uncertainty, including Local Government Reorganisation, devolution developments, and ongoing financial pressures. Clear, timely communication has remained essential in helping members respond to a rapidly changing environment.

EMC has maintained a consistent flow of information and advice through newsletters, briefings, and targeted updates, ensuring members are informed on key regional and national issues. This has included tailored communications to different audiences, improving the relevance and accessibility of information for officers and partners.

Alongside this, EMC has strengthened its external voice, supporting regional advocacy on key priorities. Media engagement, stakeholder briefings, and coordinated messaging have helped amplify member priorities at a regional and national level.

EMC has also expanded its use of digital content, including video, case studies, and campaign material, to better demonstrate impact and engage wider audiences, particularly across regional events and programme delivery. This approach has helped translate complex policy areas into accessible content, supporting engagement with a wider range of audiences and strengthening understanding of regional priorities.

Our Leadership

39 councils in the East Midlands are members of EMC and meet twice a year in plenary sessions to shape the organisation's priorities and agree our budget. In between these sessions, the work of EMC is managed through Boards made up of councillors nominated following the AGM. We send our thanks to our 25/26 board members for their support.

EMC Executive Board

Cllr Sean Matthews (**Chair**) - Lincolnshire County Council

Cllr Elly Cutkelvin (**Vice Chair**) - Leicester City Council

Cllr Tricia Gilby (**Vice Chair**) - Chesterfield Borough Council

Cllr Jewel Miah - Charnwood Borough Council

Cllr Nadine Peatfield - Derby City Council

Cllr Alan Graves - Derbyshire County Council

Cllr Craig Leyland - East Lindsey District Council

Cllr Phil King - Harborough District Council

Cllr Stuart Bray - Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Cllr Dan Harrison - Leicestershire County Council

Mayor Andy Abrahams - Mansfield District Council

Cllr Martin Griffiths - North Northamptonshire Council

Cllr Neghat Khan - Nottingham City Council

Cllr Mick Barton - Nottinghamshire County Council

Cllr Gale Waller/Cllr Christine Wise - Rutland County Council

Cllr Ashley Baxter - South Kesteven District Council

Cllr Mark Arnull - West Northamptonshire Council

EMC Management Group

Cllr Elly Cutkelvin - **Chair**

Cllr Sean Matthews - **Vice Chair**

Cllr Tricia Gilby - **Vice Chair**

Cllr Phil King - Conservative Party Group Leader

Cllr Ashley Baxter - Independent Group Leader

Cllr Jewel Miah - Labour Party Group Leader

Cllr Gale Waller - Liberal Democrats Party Group Leader

Cllr Martin Griffiths – Reform UK Group Leader

Cllr Jane Yates – Regional Employers’ Board Chair

Cllr John Doddy – Regional Migration Board Chair

Transport for the East Midlands

Mayor Peter Soulsby - **(Chair)** Leicester City Council

Cllr Chris McGiffen - **(Vice Chair)** North Northamptonshire Council

Cllr Carmel Swan - Derby City Council

Cllr Charlotte Hill - Derbyshire County Council

Cllr Carol Wood - Derbyshire County Council

Cllr Charles Whitford - Leicestershire County Council

Cllr David East - Lincolnshire County Council

Cllr Linda Woodings - Nottingham City Council

Cllr Bert Bingham - Nottinghamshire County Council

Cllr Christine Wise - Rutland County Council

Cllr Richard Butler - West Northamptonshire Council

Mayor Claire Ward - East Midlands Combined County Authority

Regional Employers' Board

Cllr Jane Yates **(Chair)** - Bolsover District Council
Cllr Jonathan Wheeler **(Vice-Chair)** - Rushcliffe Borough Council
Cllr Harrison Fowler **(Vice-Chair)** – Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Jonathan Slater – Bassetlaw District Council
Cllr Peter Bales – Broxtowe Borough Council
Cllr Tom Catton – Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Mary Green – North Kesteven District Council
Cllr Graham Cheatley – North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Sam Smith – Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr James Walker-Gurley – Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Rosemary Powell - Rutland County Council
Cllr Gale Waller - Rutland County Council
Cllr David Wilby - Rutland County Council

Regional Migration Board

Cllr Dr John Doddy **(Chair)** - Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Elly Cutkelvin **(Vice Chair)** - Leicester City Council
Cllr Alex Dale **(Vice Chair)** – Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Sarah Chambers – Derby City Council
Cllr Craig Leyland – East Lindsey District Council
Cllr Phil Knowles – Harborough District Council
Cllr Beverley Gray – Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Michael Squires – Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Alex McGonigle – Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Frank Adlington-Stringer – North East Derbyshire District Council

Cllr Mark Smith – North Kesteven District Council
Cllr James Hakewill - North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Elizabeth Wright – North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Corall Jenkins - Nottingham City Council
Cllr Neil Clarke – Rushcliffe Borough Council

Our staff

Stuart Young - Executive Director
Andrew Pritchard - Director of Policy and Infrastructure
Sam Maher - Director of HR & Councillor Development
Anna Anderson - Business Support Officer
Brein Fisher - Head of Migration Partnerships
Camila David – Resettlement Policy Officer
Harpreet Kaur – Regional Immigration Solicitor
Kyle Butterworth - Head of Rail Improvement
Lisa Bushell - Business Support Manager & Events Lead
Lisa Butterfill - HR & Development Manager
Lisa Hopkins - Business Support Officer
Maria Brambles - Resettlement Manager
Matthew Clarke – Asylum Manager
Mila Pereira - Business Support Officer
Noel Oxford - Resettlement Policy Officer
Rachael Pengelly - Communications & Marketing Specialist
Richard Herrick - Asylum Policy Officer
Sarika Kohli - Immigration Solicitor

Stuart Turner - Programme Manager

Suzanne Boulton - HR & Learning & Development Manager

DRAFT



Executive Board

11th June 2026

Local Authority Workforce and Pay – Regional Employers’ Board

Summary

This report provides an update to Members on significant issues relevant to local government as employers and provides a regional perspective.

Recommendation

Members of the Executive Board are invited to consider the issues highlighted in this report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 East Midlands Councils (EMC) through its role as the region's Employers Organisation, has the responsibility of supporting employment relations for the sector. The Regional Employers' Board provides political leadership on employment issues and councillor development and forms the Employer's side of the Regional Joint Council, which meets with joint trade unions to support employment relations on behalf of councils in the East Midlands. The Joint Council meeting follows on from each Employers' Board meeting.
- 1.2 This report provides an update for Executive Board Members from the Regional Employers' Board, as well as information on the significant issues affecting councils as employers and includes progress on key regional priorities such as:
- Pay and Rewards
 - LGR
- 1.3 An update is also provided on significant employment law developments and regional support to councils.

2. Regional Employers' Board & Joint Council Updates

- 2.1 The Regional Employers Board and Regional Joint Council are due to meet on 5th June 2026. The Employers Board will receive updates on key issues affecting councils as employers and the support provided at regional level on workforce priorities and development for employees and councillors.
- 2.2 The Regional Joint Council meeting will be focused on LGR, with union representatives from the Northamptonshire area sharing their experience of LGR and key learning points from a union perspective.
- 2.3 The Regional Joint Council meeting will also consider the results of regional benchmarking that EMC is conducting on sickness absence levels, as well as concerns relating to the recruitment and retention of planners within the sector.

3. Pay and Rewards: Local Government Pay Negotiations

- 3.1 Members will be aware from previous reports to the Executive Board that the representatives of employees within the main negotiating groups – Local Government Services (known as Green Book) covering most council employees, Chief Officers and Chief Executives – all submitted pay claims for 2026. These are available through the following link: [Pay and Rewards](#)
- 3.2 As notified to the March meeting of the Executive Board, the National Employers met on 24th March 2026 and made full and final offers were made to all three groups of a 3.3% pay increase with effect from 1st April 2026.
- 3.3 On 2nd June 2026, agreement was reached on the pay award for Chief Officers, which reflects the Employers' offer of 3.3%. Details of the award are set out in the pay circular which is available here: [Chief Officers](#)
- 3.4 Representatives of Chief Executives responded to say they will await completion of the negotiations for Green Book employees.
- 3.5 The unions representing Green Book employees are consulting their members on the offer. GMB balloted its members on a neutral basis and on the understanding that a vote to reject the offer is also a vote in favour of moving to a formal industrial action ballot. Its ballot closed on 22nd May 2026 and the outcome was to reject the offer. GMB's National Committees will consider its next steps on 18 June 2026, and has asked for a further meeting with the National Employers to set out a case for an improved offer, given the response of Unison and Unite which was to reject the offer. While further details on Unite's next steps are still awaited, Unison will be balloting its members on taking industrial action, with the ballot running from 9th July to 6th August in strategically targeted employers.
- 3.6 In addition to pay negotiations, work is continuing at national level to jointly review the national pay spine. A new pay spine is required to address the impact of the National Living Wage in recent years, and to better reflect salaries being paid locally by councils that are above the pay spine in roles below chief officer level. The work is likely to take 2 years, based on past experience and EMC will continue to keep authorities updated on progress

- and support the flow of information between councils and national colleagues. In May, a joint circular was issued which set out the agreed terms of reference for this work.
- 3.7 There remains a stalemate situation on national negotiations for Coroners', since the withdrawal of the Coroners' Society of England and Wales (CSEW) from the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Coroners and has opted instead to negotiate on an individual basis directly with their relevant local authority. EMC is supporting councils that employer coroners to ensure they receive information to inform their approach.
- 3.8 There is also no progress on pay negotiations for Craftworkers for 2025, with the majority union (Unite) rejecting the offer and the minority union agreeing it. Unite conducted industrial action ballots in some councils on this issue, none of which were in the East Midlands.
- 3.9 Soulbury Committee negotiates national terms and conditions for employees in professions such as educational psychologists. The unions representing employees covered by Soulbury have submitted a pay claim for 2026, which in summary is for an increase of RPI plus 5%. The National Employers have conducted a survey of councils on the claim, and will be meeting in June to finalise a response and offer to the Officers' Side.
- 3.10 Unions representing Youth and Community Workers submitted a pay claim for 2026, the headline of which is for a "a substantial pay rise of 10%" as well as other elements such as reducing working time without loss of pay. The National Employers have started to consult councils to help inform their response to the claim.

4. Employment Law Developments

4.1 Government Consultation on Zero Hours & Similar Contracts

- 4.1.1 On 2nd June the Government launched consultation relating to zero hours and similar contracts. The consultation relates to measures proposed through the Employment Rights Act 2025 that aim to address a viewpoint that there is "one-sided flexibility".

4.1.2 The proposed changes, which are expected to come into effect in 2027, would see:

- Employers being required to offer qualifying workers guaranteed hours that reflect the number of hours worked over a set reference period.
- Workers being entitled to reasonable notice of shifts, and changes to shifts.
- Payment when shifts are cancelled, shortened or moved at short notice.

4.1.3 The consultation seeks views on how these new rights should be implemented, including how long the reference period should be that will be used to calculate guaranteed hours - the Government's preferred option is 12 weeks. The consultation closes on 25th August 2026 and can be accessed through the following link: [Make Work Pay: ending one-sided flexibility – reforms of zero hours and similar contracts - GOV.UK](#)

4.2 **Call for Evidence on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)**

4.2.1 In April the Government launched a call for evidence regarding the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (the TUPE Regulations). There is no indication within the call for evidence of what changes might to the Regulations in future, save for indicating a commitment to strengthening the existing set of rights and protections for employees going through the TUPE process, and 'modernising' the Regulations to improve efficiency.

4.2.2 The call for evidence seeks views from those who have experience of TUPE (either as employees, employers, or unions) on the effectiveness of the current Regulations, and how they might be improved, with questions relating to a range of different aspects. Councils, who will have been through TUPE transfers (both insourcing and outsourcing) may wish to contribute their views based on their experiences to inform any changes to the Regulations. That may include any observations on the anticipated impact of a TUPE approach applying to Local Government Reorganisation. This call for evidence closes on 1st July 2026.

4.3 **Increase to HMRC Mileage Rates and Increases to Statutory Compensation Limits**

- 4.3.1 Most councils have moved away from the mileage allowances within the national terms and conditions, and instead apply the HMRC rates. In May the Government announced an increase to the HRMC rate, moving to 55p per mile (from 45p) for mileage below 10,000 miles annually. The increase was backdated to 6th April.
- 4.3.2 Separately there have also been increases from 6th April 2026 to statutory compensation limits that would be payable linked to certain rights:
- The statutory limit on a week's pay for statutory redundancy pay increased from £719 to £751 per week.
 - The maximum compensatory award for unfair dismissal increased from £118,223 to £123,543.
 - Compensation for unlawful inducements related to collectively bargained terms and conditions increased from £5,735 to £5,993.

5 Local Government Reform (LGR)

- 5.1 Supporting councils with the workforce and councillor development implications of LGR is a key feature of EMC's work programme.
- 5.2 LGR has been reflected throughout EMC's activities – as a standing item for the Regional Employers' Board and Regional Joint Council meetings, through networks co-ordinated and supported by EMC, and events.
- 5.3 In April EMC hosted a webinar for HR leads to learn from the experience of LGR from their counterparts in North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire. The session was attended by 56 colleagues from councils across the region and the event received positive feedback in providing an opportunity to understand learning points and ask questions to assist their understanding of issues that were faced.
- 5.4 EMC has also been providing development for senior leadership teams and managers on leading change. These sessions have been delivered in-house and have been well-received.

- 5.5 Providing development opportunities for managers in the lead up to LGR is a recognised requirement, and EMC has co-ordinated and supported the delivery of a range of training and development programmes, with options for gaining qualifications. Coaching and mentoring for leaders is also being supported through the regional coaching network and the provision of training in coaching and mentoring.

6 Updates on Other Regional Activity

6.1 Councillor Development

- 6.1.1 EMC's programme of events is being delivered for councillors across the region, offering a mix of in-person and virtual sessions, with many events being scheduled in the evening to help ensure accessibility for councillors.

- 6.1.2 The programme includes events on:

- Role of the Civic Head
- Chairing skills
- Planning Policy Reform and Devolution – an update following reforms first announced in 2025, for officers and members being held at Devonshire Place, Leicester on 16th July 2026.
- Making an impact at meetings
- Influencing and questioning skills to realise the potential of overview and scrutiny
- Building resilience through effective time management for councillors
- Staying Safe Online – Cyber Security for councillors
- Being an effective political mentor
- One Year On – a follow-up workshop from the Hitting the Ground running workshop provided for councillors newly elected in 2025.

- 6.1.3 In addition to the events, councillors are supported through networks such as the regional Scrutiny Network and the councillor development network. The Scrutiny Network is next scheduled to meet on 12th June 2026.

6.2 Officer Learning and Development

- 6.2.1 EMC co-ordinates a regional Learning & Organisation Development Network, which enables councils to share information and resources relating to

learning and development and helps inform regional programmes for EMC to deliver and/or co-ordinate. The network met in April and received a presentation from Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Services on their culture dashboard.

- 6.2.2 Members will be aware from previous update reports that EMC runs two low-cost Continuous Professional Development programmes – one for Environmental Health Officers and the other for Planners. In 2025/2026, the two programmes attracted 1,182 delegates. For Environmental Health Officers, the most recent event was on 23rd April and focused on environmental protection, with 117 attendees. The next event will be in June and on the theme of allergens and labelling. For planners, a seminar took place on 14th May on the new planning system which was attended by 86 officers.
- 6.2.3 The East Midlands Challenge event was hosted by EMC on 29th April, and saw 17 teams from councils across the region, where team members act as senior leadership teams facing a range of challenges. The day provides an opportunity to gain skills and self-awareness, with strengths being recognised through awards as well as an element of competition between teams. Feedback from the event from participants was extremely positive, and past attendees have stated that they gained career and personal development as a direct outcome of the experience. The overall winning team was from Rushcliffe Borough Council.

6.3 Networks

- 6.3.1 In addition to the Scrutiny and Learning & Development/Organisational Development networks mentioned above, EMC supports county-based HR networks as well as regional networks on a range of themes such as Performance, Cyber Security and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- 6.3.2 The county-based HR networks in most areas are being used as the forum to prepare for and progress with the workforce implications of LGR, and to cover the additional work are now meeting more regularly – on a monthly basis.
- 6.3.3 EMC provides a regional coaching network, which enables councils to share coaching resources and access free training for coaches. This enables

coaching to be provided in a cost-effective way, whilst ensuring high quality standards. The number of organisations that are members of the network has grown in recent years, with currently 15 organisations participating.

6.4 Consultancy

6.4.1 Councils can access individual support from EMC on a not-for-profit basis on a range of workforce issues as well as in-house training.

6.4.2 Since the last Board meeting, assignments for councils have included:

- Mediations
- Chief Executive appraisal facilitation
- Restructuring support
- Service reviews
- Pay benchmarking
- Advice and support on complex cases
- Chief Executive recruitment
- Psychometric testing
- Coaching and mentoring
- Grievance investigations
- Policy development

6.4.3 In addition to this work, EMC is supporting the delivery of a national programme of events for the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) which will be delivered throughout 2026.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Members of the Executive Board are invited to consider the issues highlighted in this report.

Cllr Jane Yates
Chair
Regional Employers' Board



Executive Board

11th June 2026

Infrastructure & Growth

Summary

This report provides a regional economic overview and seeks endorsement for the work of the TfEM Board. It discusses the implications for the East Midlands of the Government's recent RIS3 announcement and proposes a regional approach to addressing flood risk across the region.

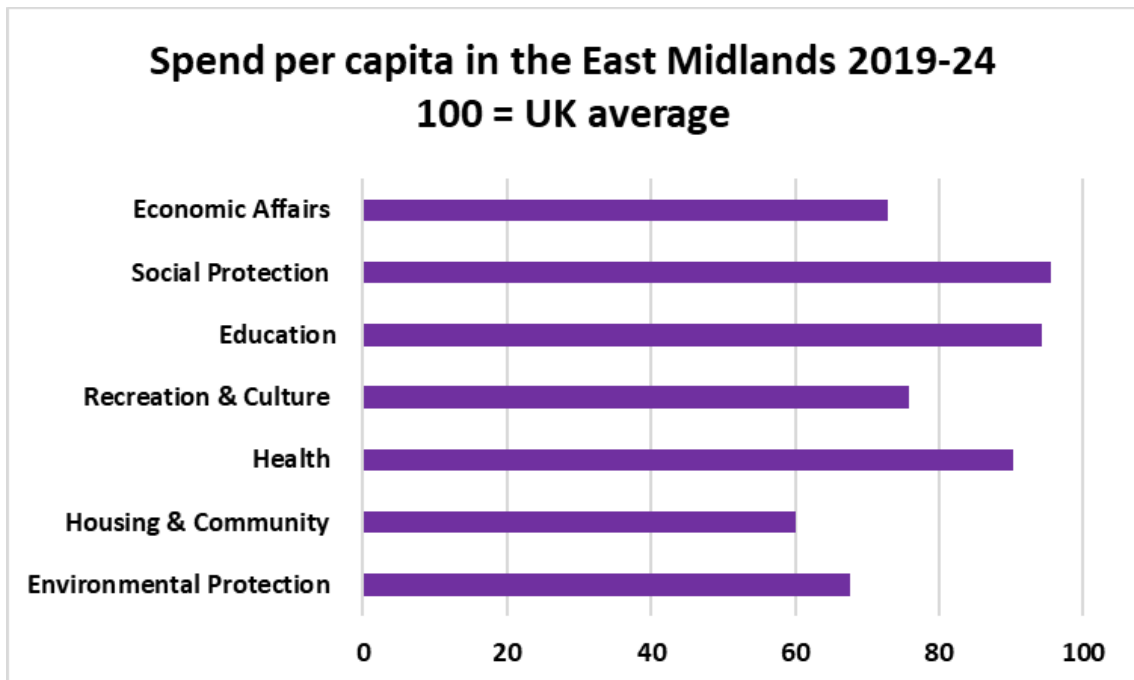
Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

- Endorse the work of the TfEM Board.
- Consider the rest of this report.
- Direct officers accordingly.

1. Growth, Productivity & Investment in the East Midlands

- 1.1 The East Midlands is now a region of 5.1 million people and 403,000 businesses. Total regional output in 2023 (as measured by GDP) was £157bn, equivalent to 5.8% of the UK economy. The East Midlands employment rate is close to the UK average at 75.1% (UK=75.0%). Median weekly earnings are below the UK average: £721 pw compared to £767pw. 10.4% of the workforce work in manufacturing, compared with 6.9% for the UK – although this percentage has declined significantly in recent years. The region’s unemployment rate has increased recently and is now above the UK average: currently at 5.5% compared to 4.9%¹.
- 1.2 Productivity has remained below the UK average over the last 20 years in the East Midlands and has been on a declining trajectory relative to the UK - currently 84.8% of the UK average in 2023²
- 1.3 The Treasury publishes an annual Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA) every July on where public money (capital and revenue) is spent and on what, in the previous financial year. The latest analysis³ demonstrates that between 2019-20 to 2023-24, total expenditure on core public services has remained consistently below the UK and England averages.



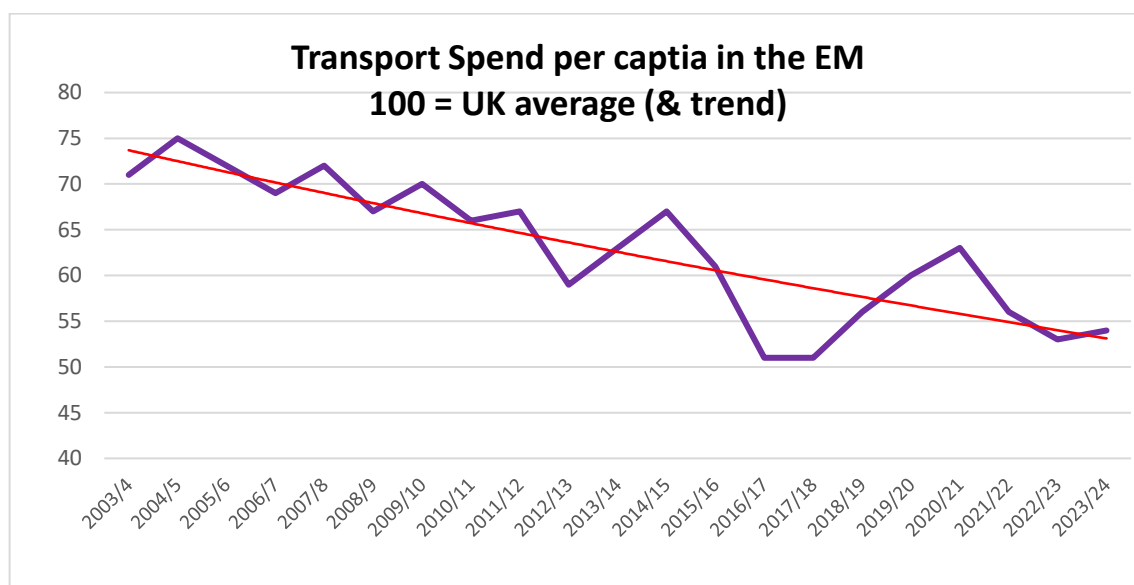
Source: [CP 1363 – Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2025](#)

¹ [Regional and National Economic Indicators - House of Commons Library](#)

² [Annual regional labour productivity - Office for National Statistics](#)

³ [CP 1363 – Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2025](#)

- 1.4 Transport spend per head has been very significantly below the UK average level for the last 20 years and has now declined to just 54% of the UK average for 2023/24, the lowest level of any UK region or nation. The disparity in levels of investment spend per head between the East Midlands (£368) and the West Midlands (£687) continues to widen. This is likely due to large-scale infrastructure programmes including HS2, several new local rail stations and related highways investment.



Source: [CP 1363 – Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2025](#) & previous releases

2. Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM)

- 2.1 Transport for the East Midlands brings together the Region’s Local Transport Authorities under the auspices of East Midlands Councils to provide collective leadership on strategic transport issues and meets on a quarterly basis. TfEM is chaired by Sir Peter Soulsby the City Mayor of Leicester. Cllr Chris McGiffen (North Northamptonshire) is the Vice Chair.

Transport Infrastructure Priorities

- 2.2 Since 2017 TfEM and Midlands Connect have identified, developed and promoted a programme of shared strategic transport infrastructure priorities to support growth and productivity and help to address the historic underfunding of the East Midlands - which has endured under all Governments for the last 25 years.
- 2.3 These priorities have flexed from time to time to reflect changing circumstances and Government policy. The current version was published in March 2024 and includes the following:

- Midland Main Line Electrification
- Nottingham-Leicester-Coventry Rail Connectivity
- Midlands-Leeds & North East Rail Connectivity
- A46 Growth Corridor & Newark
- A50/A500 Growth Corridor
- A5 Growth Corridor
- Improving Safety Reliability on the A1
- M1 Junction 24 & Surrounding Area

Road Investment

2.4 The Government published its **Roads Investment Strategy (RIS)** for five-year period between 2026/7 and 3031/2 (known as RIS3) at the end of March 2026: [Road Investment Strategy 3 \(RIS3\): 2026 to 2031](#). A number of schemes in the East Midlands have been identified by RIS3 for investment in the following categories.

Major Enhancements Continuing Construction in RIS3

2.5 **A52 Nottingham Junctions:** The scheme was originally announced in 2014 and consists of a package of measures to improve several junctions along the length of the A52 in Nottingham, including signalisation and junction reconstruction. The final phase will address the two larger western junctions: Nottingham Knight and Wheatcroft.

Major Enhancements starting in RIS3

2.6 **A38 Derby Junctions:** This scheme has been subject to several legal challenges going back many years, but the Development Consent Order (DCO) was finally confirmed in March 2025. The scheme is designed to relieve congestion at three key junctions to the west and north of the city centre, but also to enable major planned housing growth across the Derby Housing Market Area.

2.7 **A46 Newark Bypass:** This has been TfEM's top strategic road investment priority for some time. The scheme will remove a long-standing bottleneck on the A46 between the East Midlands and the Humber Ports by widening 6.5km of the existing single carriageway to a dual carriageway, providing two lanes in each direction between Farndon and Winthorpe roundabouts and improving the junction with the A1. It will also support major housing and employment growth across Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.

2.8 At present, there is no clarity on when construction work on either of these schemes will commence. It is likely the A38 Derby Junctions will start first to prevent the DCO (originally granted in 2023) becoming time expired. The indications are that the A46 Newark Bypass will not start until 2030 at the earliest

with completion in RIS4. The start date will be after the next General Election, which introduces a level of political jeopardy. It also exposes the scheme to cost inflation pressures resulting from ongoing instability in the middle east. **Further collective political representations are therefore likely to be required to expedite delivery of this scheme.**

Large Renewals – Concrete Roads

- 2.9 **A46 Concrete Reconstruction Scheme:** The A46 north of Leicester between Six Hills and Widmerpool is part of National Highways’ legacy concrete network and has been prioritised for full reconstruction due to its deterioration.

Small Scheme Programme

- 2.10 These schemes will focus on addressing localised congestion, supporting economic growth and improving opportunity. The following potential locations have been highlighted in the East Midlands:

- **A38/A50 (Toyota Island)**
- **M1 Junction 29**
- **A1/A606 Junction, Stamford**

- 2.11 Further assessment will be undertaken and a prioritised programme for delivery developed. Schemes remain subject to feasibility and value for money. Further detail to be provided in National Highways’ Delivery Plan, which is expected shortly.

National Safety Programme

- 2.12 **A5 Weedon Bec to M1 J11a:** This is one of 24 routes that have been identified across the country, with completion of 18 planned by the end of RIS3. Schemes remain subject to feasibility and value for money. Further detail to be provided in National Highways’ Delivery Plan.

RIS4 Pipeline

- 2.13 Development funding has been identified for the following enhancements:

- **A5/A426 Junction Gibbet Hill:** Junction improvement to support major planned commercial and housing growth along the A5 Corridor.
- **A5 Dodwells to Longshoot:** Improving performance and capacity of the A5 to support commercial and housing growth along the A5 Corridor. A similar proposal was prioritised by the 2010-15 Coalition Government as a ‘pinch-point’ scheme, but subsequently cancelled due to value-for-money concerns.

- **M1 Junction 28/A38:** Delivering junction improvements to support growth by reducing congestion on the A38 Corridor.
- 2.14 Any delivery of these schemes will be subject to feasibility and value for money assessments and will also be dependent on the decisions of a future Government about investment priorities for RIS4 (2032/3-2037/8).
- 2.15 In addition the Government is supporting the **A14 Junction 10a (to begin delivery in RIS3, subject to Third Party Funding and obtaining the necessary planning approvals)**, comprising developer-led proposals to build a new junction to the A14 to support major housing growth to the east of Kettering.

Major Road Network: Continuing Schemes

- 2.16 Away from the Strategic Road Network, three previously supported schemes being taken forward by Local Highway Authorities in the East Midlands received confirmation of Government funding in 2025 and are progressing:
- **A614/A6097 Corridor (Nottinghamshire):** Improvements to several junctions along the A614/A6097 corridor between the A46/A6097 junction at Bingham and the A614/A617/A6097 Ollerton roundabout.
 - **North Hykeham Relief Road (Lincolnshire):** New dual carriageway to the south of the Lincoln urban area south of North Hykeham to form a ring road around Lincoln.
 - **A511 Growth Corridor (Leicestershire):** A package of measures, including improvements to eight junctions, a dual carriageway between Thornborough Road and Whitwick Road in Coalville and an extension to Bardon Link Road.
- 2.17 In addition, the **A43 Northampton - Kettering Phase 3** (Dualling of the A43 between Overstone Grange roundabout and Holcot/Sywell roundabout) has now been recommended to continue scheme development.
- 2.18 Finally, another MRN scheme in Leicestershire, the **Melton Mowbray North and East Distributor Road (aka ‘The Pork Pie Way’)** opened in May 2026: [New Melton Mowbray bypass named Pork Pie Way after public vote - BBC News](#). The scheme comprises a single carriageway road to the east of Melton Mowbray from the A606 Burton Road to the A606 Nottingham Road. It will relieve town centre congestion and facilitate major housing growth.
- 2.19 The RIS3 Announcement has confirmed ‘in principle’ funding for several major investments in the East Midlands and raised the prospect of further funding at a later date – although experience suggests that no scheme is ever ‘fully

committed' until it is built. However, RIS3 was silent on several key TfEM (and Midlands Connect) strategic priorities, in particular:

- **M1 Junction 24 Enhancement** – which is critical to delivering the time-limited economic benefits of the East Midlands Freeport and major housing growth in North West Leicestershire.
- **A5 Strategic Enhancement** – although development funding for junction improvements has been identified, any delivery is unlikely before the mid-2030's and the rest of the route is likely to remain in its current condition.
- **A1 Safety & Reliability** - although there is the potential for a minor junction improvement at Stamford, no other funding has been identified to improve the condition of the route at this point.

Rail Service Enhancements

- 2.20 In 2020 TfEM signed a Collaboration Agreement with the Department for Transport to provide local input into the management of rail services provided by East Midlands Railway (EMR). The Agreement is joint funded and has enabled the recruitment of a TfEM Head of Rail Improvement who is accountable to the TfEM Board but sits at the interface with the DfT Rail Markets Team managing EMR's contract. In recent years the influence of this role has been extended to include services in the East Midlands run by CrossCountry and Northern.
- 2.21 The RCA has also enabled TfEM to develop independent regional evidence to support the case for DfT investment in strategic enhancements, including Midland Main Line Electrification⁴; and improved regional rail services⁵.
- 2.22 The RCA is currently funding a comprehensive refresh of regional transport and economic evidence as the basis for a revised 'Rail Strategic Statement' and a suite of supporting documents to inform the emerging Great British Railways (GBR).
- 2.23 The first public product focuses on the case for sustaining and improving rail connectivity to Lincoln and was published on 25th November 2025 entitled Keeping Pace: Enhancing Lincoln City's rail connectivity) The associated media release included quotes from the Chair of TfEM Sir Peter Soulsby, the GLCCA Mayor Dame Andrea Jenkyns and the Chair of EMC Cllr Sean Matthews is available at [Keeping Pace: Enhancing Lincoln City's Rail Connectivity](#).
- 2.24 At the end of May 2026 two more technical products were published following feedback on earlier drafts from the TfEM Board and officer groups:

⁴ [TheFuturesElectric.pdf](#)

⁵ [A-Platform-for-Growth.pdf](#)

- An overarching ‘anchor’ document analysing the relationship between transport and the economy across the East Midlands: [Routes To Prosperity – an economic and transport evidence base for the East Midlands](#)
 - An assessment of freight and the economy across the East Midlands [Freight-Growth-in-the-East-Midlands-Systra.pdf](#)
- 2.25 On operational matters, the following timetable changes were introduced in May 2026 by EMR:
- Six additional Sunday services on the Robin Hood Line to uplift to an hourly service.
 - Additional Beeston calls on Sundays on the 0927 and 1012 Nottingham – London St Pancras services.
 - Additional Edale call on a Sunday on the 0942 Nottingham – Liverpool Lime Street service.
 - Additional Netherfield call on weekdays and Saturdays on the 1003 Nottingham – Skegness service.
 - 8-car operation on EMR Connect Sunday services between Corby and London St Pancras, to mirror weekdays and Saturdays.
- 2.26 EMR are continuing the roll out the new Aurora 810 diesel electric bi-mode rolling stock. Six trains are in passenger service and further six units are being used for maintenance, testing, and driver training. However, seat reservations on Midland Main Line intercity services remain suspended due to the difficulties of running a mixed Aurora/Meridian fleet during the roll-out period.
- 2.27 Refurbishment of Class 170 and Class 158 diesel trains is continuing, albeit slowly. The first refurbished Class 360 electric train serving the Corby-London route was launched on the Friday 5th June at Kettering Station.
- 2.28 For the first time in several years, EMR are planning to serve the Skegness summer market without having to procure supplementary bus services. However, the reliance on 40-year-old Class 158 rolling stock has already caused problems, as these trains do not appear to cope well with extreme heat: [East Midlands Railway apology over 'appalling' overcrowded trains to Skegness](#). Securing a long-term rolling stock solution for the Skegness route remains a priority.
- 2.29 Looking forward, the Government has now published the Railways Bill which will establish Great British Railways (GBR): [The Railways Bill: Explanatory Notes](#). GBR is expected to become operational during 2027 and will have its HQ in Derby. Two sites in Derby have been shortlisted as locations for

GBR: Becketwell, a city centre brownfield site set for redevelopment, and Midland House, an existing railway building opposite Derby station. A decision on the preferred site is expected by the end of 2026: [Shortlist for new GBR HQ down to final two Derby locations](#)

TfEM Board

- 2.30 The TfEM Board met on 8th June 2026 and discussed the following agenda items:
- A presentation on from Network Rail on emerging proposals for Midlands Rail Hub East.
 - The implications of the RIS3 announcement for the East Midlands
 - A progress update by the MD of East Midlands Railway.
 - An update by TfEM’s Head of Rail Improvement on work to develop and extend a regional evidence base to support revised priorities prior to the formal establishment of Great British Railways in April 2027.
 - Proposals to review the TfEM Shared Priorities document last updated in March 2024.
- 2.31 The next meeting of the TfEM Board will take place on 28th September 2026.

3. Midlands Connect

- 3.1 The Midlands Connect Strategic Board met on the 24th March in Derby with Sir Peter Soulsby and Mayor Clare Ward in attendance. Cllr David East, Portfolio-holder for transport for Lincolnshire County Council attending on behalf of Mayor Dame Andrea Jenkyns.
- 3.2 Following the recent Spending Review, DfT have decided to cease funding sub-national transport bodies from the end of 2026/7. Whilst the Midlands Connect £5m budget for 2025/26 remains untouched, DfT has made only transitional funding available for 2026-7 at £2.1m.
- 3.3 The Strategic Board discussed potential options for sustaining pan-regional collaborative activity in the absence of DfT funding, based on an independent review undertaken by WMCA and EMCCA. The Board will consider further proposals at its next meeting on 24th June 2026.

4. Flood Risk in the East Midlands

- 4.1 As the Executive Board has previously discussed, the East Midlands is highly vulnerable to flooding. In addition to large expansive areas of low-lying land on the Lincolnshire Coast, the river systems of the Trent, Derwent, Soar, Witham and

Nene drain through the region's most heavily built-up areas, many of which were historically developed around river crossings.

4.2 The Environment Agency's 2024 National Assessment of Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk in England highlights that the East Midlands has the greatest share of properties at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea in England (18.4% - 127,500), and the highest proportion of properties at risk of any English Region (4.6%). This is the current risk only and does not include the impacts of surface water flooding. The condition of flood defences on the Lincolnshire coast is a particular concern.

4.3 Discussions at officer level have suggested that there may be merit in bringing together relevant elected members from each the Lead Local Flood Authorities in the East Midlands to discuss issues of common concern and potentially make collective representations to Government and the Environment Agency. **It is therefore proposed to hold an exploratory meeting on this basis in the Autumn of 2026.**

5. Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

5.1 Endorse the work of the TfEM Board.

5.2 Consider the rest of this report.

5.3 Direct officers accordingly.

Andrew Pritchard
Director of Policy & Infrastructure
East Midlands Councils



Executive Board

11th June 2026

Report of Management Group

Summary

The following report of the Management Group provides a summary on the following issues performance management and corporate governance.

Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to note:

- Delivery against the agreed Business Plan for 2026/27.
- Progress in meeting corporate governance requirements of internal and external audit.
- The position on reserves and wider financial resilience.

1. Performance Management and KPIs 2026-27

- 1.1 The Business Plan was developed in consultation with Members and agreed by Executive Board at its meeting on 27th March 2026. The agreed KPIs reflect the revised approach of the current business plan, where EMC will work across 4 themes: evidencing, influencing, collaborating and delivering.
- 1.2 Performance against the KPIs in the 1st quarter is on track, albeit we are little over 2 months into Q1. Activity against the member development programme will be focused upon in order to support engagement and outreach with our wider membership.

2. Corporate Governance

- 2.1 Management Group endorsed EMC's external financial audit and statement of accounts 2025/26. This is a statutory requirement of HM Certification Office.
- 2.2 Alongside external audit requirements, Members noted that the internal audit would commence in June 2026, with a focus on risk management, assurance and control.
- 2.3 Members also agreed the process for undertaking the annual appraisal of EMC Executive Director.

3. EMC 2025/26 Budget Outturn, Reserves and Liabilities

- 3.1 The outturn for the financial year 2025-26 is a surplus of £675. This means that the EMC Reserves have increased from £598,400 to £599,075. This is after various receipts in advance have been carried forward into the 2026-27 accounts as agreed to fund specific budget items for that year.
- 3.2 Members are reminded that EMC reserves are allocated to fund the purposes as listed below:
- £393,000 to an earmarked reserve for staffing liabilities (except pension liabilities).
 - £36,000 to an earmarked reserve for renewals (ICT and other Equipment).
 - £33,000 to an earmarked reserve for the Local Government Re-Structuring implications.
 - £137,300 to an unallocated reserve to manage unforeseen financial events.

- 3.3 All these reserves are invested on EMC's behalf by our accountable body in accordance with their investment policies which means that any interest being earned by our reserves is allocated back to EMC at the end of the financial year. Reserves, and cash held, currently earn around 1% below Bank of England base rate annually (which is presently 3.75%) and are easily accessible.

4. Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to note:

- 4.1 Delivery against the agreed Business Plan for 2026/27.
- 4.2 Progress in meeting corporate governance requirements of internal and external audit.
- 4.3 The position on reserves and wider financial resilience.

Cllr Elly Cutkelvin
Vice-Chair
East Midlands Councils