

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

## Top items this week

15 FEBRUARY 2019



Housing News



EMC Councillor  
Development Induction Offer  
2019-20



LGiU MJ State of Local  
Government Finance Survey  
2019



EMC Events for Councilors  
and Officers



## Councillor Development - induction programme 2019-20

East Midlands Councils (EMC) provides a comprehensive, value for money Councillor Development programme for member councils in the East Midlands. This week EMC has published our induction programme offering for authorities, designed to support and complement local authorities own induction programmes.

Supporting Councillors is a key area of our work, as part of this we offer;

- A tailored programme of policy briefing events for Councillors in the East Midlands
- A weekly briefing service with the latest digested news for local government
- Skills workshops delivered at our headquarters in Melton Mowbray, along with a number hosted by local authorities across the East Midlands
- The East Midlands Regional Councillor Development Charter assessment and support
- Councillor Development Network
- A Scrutiny Network for practitioners
- Personal Development Planning for Councillors

## EMC Programme of Skills Events and Conferences

**Writing Press Releases, 26 February 2019** - EMC is holding a full day workshop for Councillors and Officers on Writing Press Releases.

**Role of the Civic Head and Team, 22 May 2019** - EMC is running an event on the Role of the Civic Head and Team.

**Mentoring for Mentees, 24 May 2019** - EMC is holding two half day workshops for Councillors on Mentoring. The first session is for Councillors interested in having a Mentor. The aim of the session is to explain mentoring and the role of mentors in supporting newly elected Councillors or Councillors experiencing a new role.

- **Mentoring skills for Mentors, 24 May 2019 13:30** - for those interested in becoming a Mentor

**Chairing and effective meetings, 18 June 2019** - EMC working in partnership with Newark and Sherwood District Council to offer 2 Chairing skills workshops on 18 June 2019. **Sessions are at 14:00 and 18:00**

**Chairing and Facilitation Skills Councilors, 18 September 2019** - EMC working in partnership with Blaby District Council is running a half day Chairing and Facilitation Skills workshop for Councilors. The training is to be delivered by Nelson Training, an award winning drama based training company. **Sessions are at 13:30 and 17:30**

**East Midlands Scrutiny Conference, 4 October 2019** - A full day conference to support both Councilors and Officers that are involved in overview and scrutiny.

**Read Faster with Greater Understanding, 9 October 2019** - EMC is holding a half day workshop for Councilors 'Read Faster with Greater Understanding'.

**An Introduction to Commissioning for Elected Members, 7 November 2019** - EMC is offering Councilors the opportunity to take part in an introduction to commissioning for elected members workshop on 7 November.

**Advanced financial scrutiny skills, 21 November 2019** - EMC is working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to provide a full day workshop on advanced financial scrutiny skills.

**The Changing Landscape of Local Government Finance, 6 December 2019** - The seminar will cover the emerging impact of major changes to local government finance.

**Public Speaking for Councilors, 22 Jan 2020** - EMC is holding a half day workshop for Councilors on Public Speaking.

**Being an Effective Councilor: Strengthening and Sustaining Personal Resilience, 5 February 2020** - EMC is running a half day Personal Resilience event for councilors.

**For more information on all of these events please visit [here](#).** Additional sessions will be added in due course.

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## Housing



**James Brokenshire heralds new law protecting tenants from unfair letting fees** - Tenants will be protected from unfair letting fees and will see their tenancy deposits capped at 5 weeks' rent [details [here](#)].

**Cash boost to help build 200,000 homes in new garden towns** - A £9 million cash injection to speed up the locally-led building of new garden towns and villages across the country has been announced [details [here](#)].

The Garden Communities project is expected to deliver 200,000 properties on large sites by 2050, and the latest funding will help get 21 sites ready for development.

Work is already underway on 10,000 properties across the country in garden towns and villages, with 36,000 expected to be underway or completed by 2022. This includes, in the East Midlands;

- North Northants (Corby, Kettering & Wellingborough) - £725,000 for 33,000 homes
- Infinity, Derbyshire - £150,000 for 3,200 homes

**£250 million of housing deals struck to deliver tens of thousands of homes** - Nearly £250 million of housing deals will deliver almost 25,000 more homes, the Communities Secretary has announced this week.

As part of this, the government will be investing £157 million in infrastructure such as building roads and putting natural green space alongside developments [details [here](#)].

A new partnership has also been struck by the government's housing accelerator Homes England to build over 10,000 properties on Ministry of Defence land on 7 military bases across the country.

Homes England have agreed a partnership with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to develop land being released by the Ministry of Defence. Over 10,000 homes will be built on 7 different sites – with the potential for more surplus army land to be used in the future.

The Homes England partnership agreement with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation will see sites developed across England, including in the **East Midlands**:

- Prince William of Gloucester Barracks in Grantham, Lincolnshire
- Chetwynd Barracks in Chilwell, Nottinghamshire

**Government backs plans to create new homes and jobs in next five years** - Development plans which could see more than 10,000 new homes built across England and 14,000 new jobs created by 2024/25 are to be brought forward through a £15million government project [details [here](#)].

The One Public Estate programme was launched in 2013 to make better use of public-sector sites, free up space for new homes and create jobs.

It encourages the emergency services, local councils and government departments to work more closely together by sharing sites and creating public-sector 'hubs' - where services are delivered in one place. So far, the programme has saved taxpayers £24million in running costs, created 5,745 new jobs and released land for the development of 3,336 new homes.

The latest round of the programme will see money and support given to more than 100 local public-sector partnerships across England, to bring forward proposals for a range of new projects on public-sector sites.

These include in the East Midlands:

- £405,000 for projects in Northamptonshire, including plans to release land around Kettering railway station for the development of new houses and station improvements

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## Infrastructure & Planning



**Midlands Engine Executive Board and the Midlands Connect Strategic Board** - Both the Midlands Engine Executive Board and the Midlands Connect Strategic Board are meeting next week. An update on developments and programmes will be provided in next week's Policy Brief.

**Independent review says the average time to decide a planning appeal inquiry could be slashed from 47 to 26 weeks** - The most contentious planning cases could be decided up to 5 months faster, and some in half the time, giving certainty to communities about future developments, a major review has found. Bridget Rosewell CBE said the average time to decide a planning appeal inquiry could be slashed from an average of 47 weeks to around 26 weeks.

As [Rosewell's report](#) was published this week, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said speeding up decisions can help the government achieve its ambition of delivering 300,000 homes each year by the mid-2020s.

The [final report](#) was published on 12 February 2019. The government will now consider the findings before publishing a response in the coming months [details [here](#)].

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## Infrastructure, Planning continued



**Leicester City Council has submitted a bid for £10million of Department for Transport funding for a range of city transport schemes** - The bid, as part of the council's Transforming Cities work, would secure investment for major projects focusing on walking, cycling and bus infrastructure across the city, in schemes supporting the local economy and linked to improving air quality.

Cities and regions across the UK are bidding for a share of £1.2bn of Department for Transport funding.

Leicester is one of 10 cities, selected from 27 that originally applied, initially invited to bid for a share of £60million in the first phase of the initiative, for schemes to be delivered in 2019/20 [details [here](#)].

## Local Government News



**Report: LGiU MJ State of Local Government Finance Survey 2019** - LGiU and The MJ have run the State of Local Government Finance Survey every January since 2012 to coincide with councils setting their annual budgets. The results give a snapshot of the key pressures facing councils and the impact of ongoing financial uncertainty on their communities.

This year 158 responses were received from 123 individual councils, meaning that over a third of English councils are represented in the results. Responses were received from a broad cross-section of councils, encompassing county, district and unitary authorities, a mixture of political control, and all regions.

The survey questions covered topics including income sources, confidence, service level spending and public trust.

Key findings include:

- Eight in ten (80%) councils say they are not confident in the sustainability of local government finance; none said they were 'very confident'.
- 97% of councils plan to increase council tax in 2019-20, three quarters by more than 2.5% (the maximum increase without a referendum is 3% in most places).
- Over half of councils (53%) plan to dip into their reserves this year. Worryingly, 40% of councils plan to use their reserves two years running.

Children's Services and Education is the top immediate financial pressure for the second year running (36% of councils), ahead of Adult Social Care (23%) which has historically ranked highest. However Adult Social Care is still under severe strain, being named as the top long term financial pressure (37% of councils).

**22 authorities in the East Midlands responded to the survey.** To access the full report visit [here](#).

## Community issues



**James Brokenshire unveils next steps to building integrated communities** - Better integrated communities and a stronger society based on the common themes that bind people and places together are the driving force in the [Integrated Communities Action Plan](#), published this week.

The Communities Secretary has outlined the government's next steps to deliver the vision of the [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#).

It is backed by £50 million of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and additional funding from other government departments as they develop and implement their own commitments to build integrated communities [details [here](#)].

## EMC Events



**Writing for Results - how to write documents that get the results you want!** - EMC is holding a one day workshop on writing and producing documents on 27 March 2019. By the end of the course, participants will be able to plan and produce documents that: follow a logical structure, are easy to read and achieve a desired result, look professional. For more information about this workshop visit [here](#).

## EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Martin Hill OBE  
Vice Chair: Cllr Jon Collins  
Vice Chair: Cllr Chris Millar  
Conservative Group: Cllr Roger Blaney  
Labour Group: Cllr Anne Western CBE  
Lib Dem Group: Cllr David Bill MBE  
Independent Group: Mayor Kate Allsop  
Executive Director: Stuart Young

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