

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

Top items this week

17 DECEMBER 2021



Regional Deal 2022-23 online information service for HR



Provisional Finance Settlement



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee report on High Streets



EMC Events for Councillors and Officers

Provisional Finance Settlement

This collection covers the provisional local government finance settlement for 2022 to 2023. The final 2022 to 2023 settlement will be laid before the House of Commons in early 2022.

The Provisional Finance Settlement includes:

- **Funding for social care:** £1 billion of additional funding available for social care. In addition, £162 million will be allocated to prepare councils for social care reform and to help move towards providing a fair cost of care. Allocations can be found [here](#).
- **Council tax rises:** From next year, the amount council tax can be increased without a vote has been reduced to 2%, with an extra 1% for councils with adult social care responsibilities.
- **New Homes Bonus:** £554 million has been allocated to English councils in 2022/23. Allocations can be found [here](#).
- **Lower Tier Services Grant:** Providing £111 million to councils with responsibility for services such as homelessness, planning, recycling and refuse collection and leisure services. Allocations can be found [here](#).
- **Support for rural areas:** £85 million Rural Service Delivery Grant will continue to be provided.
- **Revenue Support Grant:** An uplift to the Revenue Support Grant in line with inflation, worth over £70 million.

Ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources - The data used to assess this has not been updated in a number of years, dating from 2013-14 to a large degree. Over the coming months, DLUHC will work closely with the sector and other stakeholders to update this and to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector before consulting on any potential changes.

As part of this options will be considered to support local authorities through transitional protection. Councils should note that one off grant funding provided in the Local Government Finance Settlement in 2022/23 will be excluded from potential transitional protections.

Further information can be found [here](#).

In addition, the Home Office has published the provisional police funding settlement, which includes setting out funding allocations for Police and Crime Commissioners. The policing system will receive up to £16.9 billion to tackle crime and recruit more officers in 2022/23, a £1.1 billion increase on last year [details [here](#)].

EMC News

Workshop on T Levels, 20 January 2022 - EMC will be hosting a free workshop for on 20 January 2022 from 10.00-11.30am in partnership with the LGA on T Levels. The session will explain T Levels and work placements. These can be a useful opportunity to develop relevant skills and build connections with our future workforce. For further information contact mila.pereira@emcouncils.gov.uk

Regional Deal 2022-23 online information service for HR - Demonstrating the value of collaborating, EMC negotiates a discount to subscribe to the online information service Xperthr on behalf of our member councils. We have negotiated a price freeze of rates for the coming year based on the current number of user licences. For more information see our HR Bulletin [here](#).

You can join the regional scheme or renew your subscription by contacting Mila by Friday 28th January 2022, letting her know how many licences you require: mila.pereira@emcouncils.gov.uk

Infrastructure, Planning & Housing



New homes to produce nearly a third less carbon - New homes and buildings in England will have to produce significantly less CO2 under new rules announced by the government this week to help the country move towards net zero [details [here](#)].

Public spending by country and region by House of Commons Library – Published this week by the House of Commons Library, this briefing paper gives figures on the level of public spending in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [available from [here](#)]. It also gives figures for the English regions. The publication includes details that;

“In 2020/21, public spending per person in the UK as a whole was £13,414. In England, it was £13,166 (2% below the UK average). This compares with:

- Scotland: £14,842 (11% above the UK average)
- Wales: £14,222 (6% above the UK average)
- Northern Ireland £15,357 (14% above the UK average).

Among the English regions, public spending per person was lowest in the East Midlands at £12,133 (10% below the UK average) and highest in London at £15,490 (15% higher than the UK average)”.

Space Park Leicester Phase two completed - The keys to the second phase of a ground-breaking £100 million research, innovation and teaching hub for space-related high-tech companies and researchers in Leicester have been handed over. Space Park Leicester, established by the University of Leicester in partnership with local, national and international partners, consists of a pioneering research, innovation and teaching hub, which will incorporate academic research, industrial space, and Earth observation research and development (R&D) [details [here](#)].

Inquiry launch: Fuelling the future: motive power and connectivity - The Transport Committee is to examine the effect of Government fuel policy on connectivity, capacity and sustainability across all transport modes including motor vehicles, maritime, rail and aviation, up to 2050 [details [here](#)].

Climate Change & Sustainable Development

Government funding targeted at more affordable zero-emission vehicles as market charges ahead in shift towards an electric future - Changes to the plug-in grant scheme to enable funding to go further and to help more people make the switch to an electric vehicle.

From this week the government will provide grants of up to £1,500 for electric cars priced under £32,000, with currently around 20 models on the market. Support for wheelchair accessible vehicles is being prioritised, with these retaining the £2,500 grant and a higher £35,000 price cap [details [here](#)].

Health & Social Care



Will Government’s adult social care reforms go far enough? Levelling Up Committee evidence session - The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee held an evidence session as part of its inquiry into long-term funding of adult social care, on 13 December. In this session, the cross-party committee of MPs questioned witnesses from health think-tanks and representatives of the supported housing sector, as well as from the Institute of Economic

Affairs and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Among the topics discussed were the Government’s forthcoming reforms to the health and social care sector – the Integration and Innovation White Paper announced in February; the Build Back Better Health and Social Care Plan announced in September; and the People at the Heart of Care White Paper published this month [details [here](#)].

LGA publication, Must Know: Loneliness, Is your council actively tackling loneliness? - the publication [here](#).

Employers’ Information



NJC Circular, COVID -19: Return to working at home - The NJC has issued another COVID-19 circular which can be found [here](#). The Circular provides joint guidance about working arrangements from 13 December 2021.

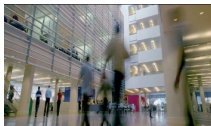
Local Government News



Measures to improve local audit delays - This publication sets out a range of measures agreed with key partners to support the timely completion of local government audits and the ongoing stability of the local audit market. These measures will help to ensure that audit provides transparency and accountability in local councils [details [here](#)].

New Blueprint to protect UK from Cyber Threats - A new National Cyber Strategy has been announced, setting out how we will protect and promote UK interests in rapidly evolving online world [details [here](#)].

Local Government News continued



Nottingham City Council takes further action on Housing Revenue Account issue - Nottingham City Council has taken further action following its recent announcement that it had identified a serious issue involving funds from the Housing Revenue Account being wrongly used for General Fund purposes for all council services.

The issue was initially identified as part of ongoing work to confirm that its financial governance and practices were fully compliant. This supports ongoing work in line with the council's Recovery & Improvement Plan. The council is taking immediate steps to cease this and to refund to the Housing Revenue Account the full amount from its General Fund reserves.

The use of funds in this way is a breach of local government financial law and requires council statutory officers to issue both a Section 114 Notice and a Section 5 Notice – a formal acknowledgement that it has acted unlawfully, in this case specifically in relation to housing services. This is distinct from Section 114 Notices covering all council activities and so does not require further spending controls to be introduced.

To view the full press release from Nottingham City Council visit [here](#).

Supporting councils with business engagement - The LGA commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake research to identify and capture the learning from councils' extensive contact with businesses over the last 18 months in the context of COVID-19. This report sets out how councils can engage more effectively with businesses in the future to support economic recovery [details [here](#)].

High Streets: The Government must learn lessons from Covid to build back better - The Government should immediately conduct a full "lessons learned" review on the impact on high streets of central and local government handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, says the cross-party Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee in their report [details [here](#)]. The Committee's report includes recommendations which:

- Call for the full "lessons learned" review on the high streets to be conducted immediately, ahead of the main independent Covid-19 inquiry
- Support the principle of an online sales tax
- Call for the Government to move away from competitive bidding processes for town regeneration schemes and shift to greater local devolution of funding.

EMC Events



Regional Employment Law Update on 19 January 2022, 10.00am to 12.15pm (virtual event) - EMC are very pleased to be able to provide a virtual Regional Employment Law Update on **Wednesday 19th January 2022 at 10.00am to 12.15pm** facilitated by Darren Newman.

The session will cover current employment law issues with a focus on the frequent questions and concerns that you have been raising with us at EMC relating to current challenges presented by the pandemic.

On wider employment law, the session will also cover implications of important cases on collective bargaining, discrimination, employment status, redundancy, flexible working, disability discrimination and an employee's political activities.

This session will give you an overall view of what has been going on in employment law over the last 12 months and look forward to what we can expect in 2022. As usual there will be plenty of time for questions.

The cost to attend will be discounted at **£65 per delegate** with a further discount for multiple bookings. To book places please visit our website [here](#). A purchase order number will also be required.

EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Martin Hill OBE

Vice Chair: Cllr David Mellen

Vice Chair: Cllr Jonathan Morgan

Conservative Group: Cllr Roger Blaney

Labour Group: Cllr Rob Parker

Lib Dem Group: Cllr David Bill MBE

Independent Group: Cllr Jason Zadrozny

Executive Director: Stuart Young

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