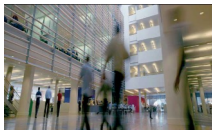


A weekly round up of local government news in the East Midlands brought to you by East Midlands Councils

## Top items this week

18 DECEMBER 2020



Local Government Secretary has announced new measures for Nottingham



Political & business leaders call on government to make commitment to HS2



East Midlands Epidemiology COVID-19



EMC Events for Councillors and Officers

## Political and business leaders call on government to avoid 'station on the cheap' and make final commitment to HS2

Political and business leaders from across the East Midlands have reacted angrily to proposals suggesting the region's HS2 connection to Birmingham and the North could be drastically scaled back.

The National Infrastructure Commission's Rail Needs Assessment comes ahead of the Government's announcements about how and where it will fund major rail investments aimed at helping the UK recover from Covid and create jobs across the country.

Regional leaders in the Midlands and the North have spent the past five years developing detailed plans which use HS2's arrival at Toton and Chesterfield as the centrepiece of a joined-up economic growth strategy which would create thousands of jobs and transform rail connections between the East Midlands, Birmingham, Leeds, the North East and Scotland.

But the NIC has tabled ideas which include a proposal for the HS2 line to terminate at East Midlands Parkway – a location dismissed as unworkable by feasibility studies – and put passengers back on to the old network if they want to travel further north.

Despite indicating that future rail connectivity could be scaled down in the Midlands, the NIC's report appears to assume that the second stage of Crossrail in London - previously estimated to cost £27 billion - should go ahead.

Government will take the final decision on which option to choose in the East Midlands, with political and business leaders in the region now doubling down on their demands that it honours its commitment to build the station at Toton and deliver HS2 East in full.

The full press release is available from [here](#).

## Government announces funding for councils

Councils across England will receive £51.2 billion next year – an increase of £2.2 billion from last year. It includes a £2.2 billion increase in core funding – including a £1 billion increase in social care funding [\[here\]](#).

Also announced are allocations for £1.55 billion of unringfenced funding for councils to continue to support their communities during the pandemic and lead the recovery in their local areas. The allocation of this money has taken into account a range of factors including population and deprivation, as well as the varying cost of delivering services across the country.

In addition to the £1.55 billion, £670 million has also been confirmed to enable councils to continue reducing council tax bills for those least able to pay, including households impacted financially by the pandemic.

A local tax income guarantee scheme for irrecoverable losses this year will also help compensate councils for lost council tax and business rates income. This means today we are confirming an estimated £3 billion of additional support for councils to deal with the pandemic, taking the total overall to over £10 billion.

Included in the £51.2 billion provisional settlement is:

- Funding for new homes
- Giving local residents a voice on council tax rises
- Help for rough sleepers
- A new Lower Tier Services Grant
- More support for victims of domestic abuse
- Support for rural areas

**LGA On-the-Day Briefing** - This briefing covers the provisional local government finance settlement for 2021/22. It is expected that the final 2021/22 settlement to be laid before the House of Commons for its approval in late January or early February 2021 [\[access the briefing from here\]](#).

**Place To Call Home Virtual Information Event, 6 January 2021** - People across the East Midlands are invited to attend a virtual information event and find out how they can help offer refugees a new start in life. The event will take place at 10am on Wednesday, January 6 and is for anyone considering helping by becoming a foster carer or supported lodgings provider. The event will include details of the rewarding nature of fostering, the application process and the training and support available, as well as the payments and allowances carers receive. For more information, or to book your place, please click [here](#). Please do share this widely.

### EMC Support Activity

**East Midlands Scrutiny Network** - earlier this month EMC hosted the latest meeting of the East Midlands Scrutiny network. The network meeting provided those involved with an opportunity to share achievements from 2020 and goals for 2021. The next network meeting will take place on 19 March 2021, the focus of this network meeting will be on Scrutiny protocols. For more information on the network visit [here](#).

### EMC Councillor Events

**Climate Change Workshop, Community Engagement and Behaviour Change** - East Midlands Councils and the LGA, working in partnership are offering a series of virtual interactive workshops for Councillors on Climate Change, starting with a focused working exploring community engagement and behaviour change on 19 January 2021.

The first workshop will include a presentation from Cllr Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor Environment and Transportation, Leicester City Council on **Leicester's climate emergency consultation process - building a collaborative approach**. Further information on the first workshop will be available shortly, to pre register to attend please visit [here](#).

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### Infrastructure, Planning & Housing



**Plan to regenerate England's cities with new homes** - New measures to level up England's cities and provide much-needed new homes [details [here](#)].

- New measures to help cities and their high streets recover from the pandemic
- More homes in urban areas - tackling unaffordability and making the most of brownfield land with £100 million of funding
- Revision of '80/20' funding rule to help level up all parts of England

**New £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund announced** - Fund announced to help end the scandal of excessive waking watch costs, as part of a further move to support thousands of residents in high-rise buildings [details [here](#)].

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### Brexit News and Information

**High Risk Food Not of Animal Origin Export Certification** - From 1 January, the UK will become a third country for the purposes of exporting to the EU, and Great British exports of High Risk Food Not of Animal Origin (HRFNAO) products to the EU will be subject to the EU's import controls. (Examples of HRNOAOs include pistachio nuts or sultanas from Turkey).

As the EU will no longer recognise the UK's controls as satisfying EU requirements, some types of HRFNAO will need to have laboratory sampling conducted in Great Britain and be re-certificated by the competent authority in Great Britain in order to comply with the EU's requirements.

Defra will be asking councils to act as the competent authority and certify HRFNAO official certificates for export. Certification activity is chargeable, although it is recognised that this is not a statutory requirement.

Defra will provide further information on the export of HRFNAO and the certification role of FCCOs on 15 December at their Local Authorities Steering Group.

HRFNAO from GB into NI will also be subject to controls, however a grace period has been granted for retail bound goods, including HRFNAO. Please contact: [SPS.HRFNAO@defra.gov.uk](mailto:SPS.HRFNAO@defra.gov.uk) with any questions/comments you wish to raise.

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### Homelessness



**Extra help for rough sleepers with drug and alcohol dependency** - Rough sleepers across England will receive extra support to help them recover from drug and alcohol misuse.

A full breakdown of funding allocations for the substance misuse fund is available [here](#), this includes **£367,234 for Northamptonshire**.

**Re-thinking homelessness prevention** - This LGA document is intended to explore our roles further, so that we can begin to rethink homelessness prevention. At the heart of this research was a recognition that the way we talk about homelessness prevention needs to change, recognising the vital importance of upstream cross-service prevention work in local homelessness systems, and the role of councils, their partners and central government policy in delivering this work [details [here](#)].

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## Local Government News

**Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced new measures for Nottingham City Council** - This follows a non-statutory review into the council's finances last month.

An Improvement and Assurance Board, made up of experts in governance and finance, appointed by the department, will be set up to help the council deliver the report's recommendations on governance and company ownership.

The council must put forward their 3-year recovery plan by the end of January 2021. This will set out how they will improve their financial position and review their investments. They must submit progress reports to the Department on a quarterly basis.

The [findings of the review](#) have been published on GOV.UK alongside the Local Government Secretary's letter to lead reviewer Max Caller CBE. To read the full announcement visit [here](#).

**Nottingham City Council response to Government's rapid review** - access the response using this link [here](#).

**ADSO 2020 Awards, November 2020** - North Kesteven District Council were announced as Democratic Services Team of the Year. Belated congratulations to colleagues at North Kesteven District Council for their achievement [for more on the awards visit [here](#)].

**Local authority financial reporting and external audit: government response to the Redmond review** - MHCLG's response to Sir Tony Redmond's independent review into the effectiveness of external audit and transparency of financial reporting in local authorities [details [here](#)].

**Parliamentary Constituencies Act passed will make constituencies across the UK more equal in size** - The Government's Parliamentary Constituencies Act has received Royal Assent this week, which means the geographical boundaries of the UK's 650 constituencies will be redrawn to each contain a near equal number of eligible voters [details [here](#)].

**A scrutiny team's perspective on the impact of lockdown and experiences of restarting** - In the latest from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, their series of articles from scrutiny practitioners reflecting on their experiences during the pandemic [details [here](#)].

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## Health & Social Care

**East Midlands Epidemiology** - Epidemiology information for the East Midlands from Public Health England East Midlands regarding COVID cases in the East Midlands available from [here](#).

**Covid-19 Update, Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care** - Statement made on 17 December 2020 regarding the Tier decisions [access the statement from [here](#)].

**COVID-19 Adult safeguarding insight project: findings and discussion** - This LGA project was developed to create a national picture regarding safeguarding adults' activity during the COVID-19 pandemic [access from [here](#)].

**Specialised supported housing: guidance for local government and NHS commissioners** - This is LGA guidance for local government and NHS commissioners about a category of supported housing referred to as 'Specialised Supported Housing' (SSH), particularly lease-based models of SSH [details [here](#)].

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## EMC Events

**Leadership Development Programme** - EMC has launched its new Leadership Development programme for Senior and Middle Managers. The programme 'Leading in turbulent times' is set in the context of the unique challenges posed by Covid-19 including change, complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty.

The aim of this programme is to provide senior and middle managers with the skills, knowledge and capability to lead their people through turbulent times. Delivered virtually, this programme provides a flexible approach to learning through short webinars which address key issues and provide practical tools to support managers. For more information please contact [Kirsty.lowe@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.lowe@emcouncils.gov.uk) or visit [here](#).

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## 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 Alan Rhodes

Lib Dem Group: Cllr David Bill MBE

Independent Group: Cllr Jason Zadrozny

Executive Director: Stuart Young

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