

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

Top items this week

21 MAY 2021



Performance Network Awards 2021, finalists



TfEM has offered a cautious welcome to the Government's Rail White



Funding for Homelessness and High Streets



EMC Events for Councillors and Officers

Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM) has offered a cautious welcome to the Government's Rail White Paper



Transport for the East Midlands

Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM) has offered a cautious welcome to the Government's Rail White Paper (Williams-Shapps Rail Plan) published this week, but local political leaders want assurances that promised investment will still be delivered.

Sir Peter Soulsby, Chair of TfEM and City Mayor of Leicester said:

"The establishment of a new arms-length body 'Great British Railways' should ensure that the management of track and train is better co-ordinated and improve the running of the railway. But it will be important that these new arrangements are responsive to the needs of local communities and businesses in the East Midlands. We must also ensure that the improvements to the Region's services and rolling stock previously promised by Government are delivered in full. The multi-year Collaboration Agreement TfEM signed by Ministers in September 2020 gives councils a voice in the management of our rail services to provide local accountability, and we look forward to working with GBR to deliver a better railway for the East Midlands.

Cllr Richard Davies, Vice Chair of TfEM and Transport Lead for Lincolnshire County Council said:

"This week EMR introduced the first phase of a promised program of rail improvements in the East Midlands, including new inter-city and regional services, and the first electric trains serving Corby. If we are to 'build back better' from Covid and support our local communities and businesses, we must continue to invest in our railway. Our rural and coastal areas in particular have suffered from poor rail services for many years, and it is vital that all the enhancements set out in the previous Franchise Agreement are delivered under these new arrangements. Modern, flexible and affordable ticketing will also be key, and I am pleased to see that this is part of the Government's thinking.

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

Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail - The [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#) was published this week. A new public body, Great British Railways, will run and plan the rail network, own the infrastructure, and receive the fare revenue. It will procure passenger services and set most fares and timetables. This will bring the whole system under single, national leadership with a new brand and identity, built upon the famous double arrow.

East Midlands Councils EMC Councillor Events

Chairing and effective meetings, Friday 18 June, 10:00 - 13:00 - It covers formal roles such as chairing full council or a planning committee, as well as less formal approaches to chairing eg. for scrutiny activity and public meetings. The focus is guided by delegates and can include problem solving around challenges chairs might face [details [here](#)].

Audience - The workshop is suitable for new and continuing chairs. **Costs** - £75 per person (plus VAT).

Workshop for Chairs and Vice chairs of overview and scrutiny, Thursday 24 June, 10:00 - 13:00 - This workshop will cover the principles behind scrutiny and the different ways of working, as well as skills for the roles. It will look at the formal roles such as O&S committee meetings, less formal approaches to scrutiny such as task and finish groups and inquiry days and the importance of all parts of the system collaborating constructively through scrutiny. [details [here](#)].

Audience - for new and experienced non-executive councillors and co-optees involved in O&S activity. **Costs** - £75 per person (plus VAT).

Infrastructure, Planning & Housing

East Midlands RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence - The East Midlands RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate projects, plans and people who have helped create exceptional places and improved lives. This year's closing date for entries is the 2 July. Further details [here](#).

Communities and Local Government Select Committee examines impact of changes to Permitted Development Rights - The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee held the first session of its inquiry into Permitted Development Rights on Monday 17, it took evidence from local government, the property sector, the Country Land and Business Association and the homelessness charity, Shelter [details [here](#)].

Transport Select Committee held evidence session into the roll-out and safety of smart motorways - This session was the first session of the Transport Committee's inquiry on the rollout and safety of smart motorways. MPs will hear from motoring groups and emergency services about the Government's Smart Motorway Safety: Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan, which was published last March [details [here](#)].

Economic Development

More high streets set for funding boost as reopening accelerates - Further 57 English high streets to receive a share of over £830 million to improve transport links, build new homes and transform underused spaces [details [here](#)].

The places awarded funding from the **East Midlands** are:

- Derby City Centre, St Peters Cross – £15,034,000
- Sutton-in-Ashfield (Nottinghamshire) – £6,279,871
- Grantham, South Kesteven (Lincolnshire) – £5,556,042
- Nottingham City Centre, West End Point – £12,523,981
- Heanor, Amber Valley – £8,592,837
- Northampton – £8,427,625
- Buxton, High Peak – £6,608,222

Government Review of Local Enterprise Partnerships - The recent HM Budget included [an announcement that the Government intends to undertake a review of LEPs](#), "We [Gov't] will also be working with local businesses on the future role of Local Enterprise Partnerships. We want to ensure local businesses have clear representation and support in their area, in order to drive the recovery. We will work with Local Enterprise Partnerships over the coming months, with a view to announcing more detailed plans ahead of summer recess. This will also include consideration of Local Enterprise Partnership geographies."

Consultation with Local Government colleagues was started at this weeks' Chief Executives meeting, with discussion led by the BEIS/MHCLG Cities and Local Growth Team.

Responses are invited on 4 initial questions but colleagues are welcome to highlight any further points they wish:

1. Which elements of current LEP activity have been most helpful to supporting a) your individual organisations; and b) wider growth in the region over the last ten years?
2. What role do you believe that local/regional business institutions can best play in supporting future growth in the region, particularly given the economic changes as a result of the Covid pandemic?
3. What – if any – changes would you like to see made to the LEP model in future? What would you miss if they weren't there? How would you fill any gap? This could cover functions, geography or governance.

Which areas of current LEP support do you believe most require tailoring for local geographies/needs? Are there any that would be most helpfully standardised nationwide?

Please share your feedback with Pete Holmes, Assistant Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit (pete.holmes@beis.gov.uk). Please note - comments will be anonymised and not attributable to individual Local Authorities.

Homelessness

Councils given further £200 million in next stage of successful rough sleeping programme - More rough sleepers are set to be helped off the streets and into safe accommodation thanks to a further £203 million funding [details [here](#)].

- Councils to receive £203 million Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to help people off the streets – an 81% increase from the £112 million provided last year
- Funding will provide 14,500 bed spaces and 2,700 support staff
- Analysis shows programme has reduced rough sleeping by 32%
- Part of £750 million pledged to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year

The funding will be allocated to councils across England and will support vital projects such as shelters, specialist mental health or addiction services, and targeted support to help rough sleepers off the streets for good.

It will be used by councils, charities and other local groups to fund up to 14,500 bed spaces and 2,700 support staff across England. For details of allocations for the East Midlands visit [here](#).

Local Government News and wider

Government publishes update to audit review response - The Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) – the new regulator being established to replace the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) – will be strengthened with new powers over local government audit, protecting public funds and ensuring councils are best serving taxpayers [details [here](#)]. The new regulator, which will contain a standalone local audit unit, will bring all regulatory functions into one place, to better coordinate a new, simplified local audit framework.

- New powers for Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority on local government audit
- Public Sector Audit Appointments is reconfirmed as appointing body for audit procurement and contract management
- Government update addresses all independent recommendations into local audit

Performance Network Awards 2021, finalists - APSE is pleased to announce the finalists in this year's Performance Networks Best and Most Improved Performer Awards [details [here](#)]. East Midlands Councils would like to wish all those shortlisted from the East Midlands the best of luck. Those shortlisted from the East Midlands are;

Catering - Derbyshire County Council

- **Most improved performers includes** - Derbyshire County Council

Parks, open spaces and horticultural services - Most improved performers includes - North East Derbyshire District Council

Refuse collection - Corby-Kettering Shared Service (Borough Council) and North East Derbyshire District Council

Roads, highways and winter maintenance services

- **Most improved performers include** - Nottinghamshire County Council

Sports and leisure facility management

- **Most improved performers include** - Corby Borough Council

Street cleansing - Gedling Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council

- **Most improved performers include** - Bolsover District Council and Gedling Borough Council

Street lighting - Derbyshire County Council

Employers' Information

NJC for Local Government Services - Christmas Day & Boxing Day 2021 and New Year's Day 2022 - The NJC has issued a circular setting out guidance on working arrangements over Christmas & New Year holidays [details [here](#)].

COVID-19 Workforce Survey, week ending 9 April 2021 - This LGA report is part of a series of monthly surveys of all councils in England and Wales collecting key workforce data on how the sector is responding to COVID-19 [[here](#)].

SJI News - SGI Europe's newsletters provide an update on recent developments at European level on workforce matters and the most recent newsletter is available from [here](#).

Health & Social Care

Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK - The official UK government website for data and insights on coronavirus (COVID-19). Including data on Testing, cases and vaccinations. With case information by region and local authorities [[here](#)].

EMC Events

Report Writing, 30 June - EMC is hosting a 3 hour virtual workshops on report writing. The virtual workshop will be highly interactive [full details [here](#)]. The course will explore;

- **What are the expectations with regards written reports in your role?**
- **What should we think about before writing the report?** Exploring: the audience and their expectations, language, tone, length.

The virtual workshop will use both plenary and breakout time to ensure maximum delegate participation, making the session interactive for those taking part.

EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Martin Hill OBE

Vice Chair: Cllr David Mellen

Vice Chair: Cllr Jonathan Morgan

Conservative Group: Cllr Roger Blaney

Labour Group: to be confirmed

Lib Dem Group: Cllr David Bill MBE

Independent Group: Cllr Jason Zadrozny

Executive Director: Stuart Young

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