

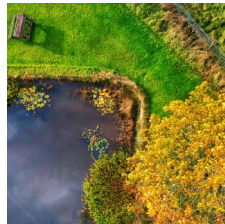
A weekly round up of local government news in the East Midlands brought to you by
East Midlands Councils

Top items this week

13 JANUARY 2023



£7 million tech fund to decarbonise freight and boost innovation



New approach to sustainable drainage to reduce flood risk



Up to £250 million to speed up hospital discharge



Local Authority Housing Fund for Ukrainians and Afghans

£7 million tech fund to decarbonise freight and boost innovation

The Government has launched a new £7 million fund to help small to medium-sized businesses to develop greener and more efficient solutions for freight.

The freight innovation fund (FIF) will go to up to 36 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They will then work with industry-leading companies to develop innovations to make freight more efficient, resilient and greener, such as ways to improve how freight moves between rail, road and maritime transport.

The innovation fund was announced last year within the government's future of freight plan, the first-ever cross-modal and cross-government plan for the UK freight transport sector. It targets the 5 priorities for the freight sector identified in the plan, including being cost-efficient, reliable, resilient, environmentally sustainable, and valued by society.

[Read more.](#)

Government introduces laws to mitigate the disruption of strikes on the public

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy has introduced a bill which will set minimum levels of service which must be met during strikes to ensure the safety of the public and their access to public services.

The government will first consult on minimum service levels for fire, ambulance, and rail services, while sectors such as education, other transport services, border security, other health services and nuclear decommissioning are also listed on the bill.

[Read more.](#)

EMC Training and events

[East Midlands Regional Pay Briefing— Wednesday 8 February](#)

A virtual regional pay briefing to enable councils' senior officers and lead Members to meet with national negotiators to discuss any response to the claim.

[East Midlands Challenge 2023— Thursday 16 March](#)

A fantastic opportunity for aspiring leaders to gain exposure to issues outside of their normal work giving them a taste of what senior management is really like.

Net Zero Review published

Former Energy Minister Chris Skidmore has published his Net Zero Review, outlining the opportunities offered by net zero.

The review, titled Mission Zero, contains 129 recommendations covering areas including the greater role that business can be supported to play, making better use of infrastructure and delivering more energy efficient homes.

[Read more.](#)

New approach to sustainable drainage set to reduce flood risk and clean up rivers

A consistent approach to sustainable drainage systems is set to be incorporated into new developments in England.

The recommendation to make sustainable drainage systems mandatory to new developments in England is the result of the Government's review – published this week. This will reduce the risk of surface water flooding, pollution and help alleviate the pressures on our traditional drainage and sewerage systems.

The Government will now devise regulations and processes for the creation of sustainable drainage systems at new developments through the implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and will hold a public consultation later this year.

Implementation of the new approach is expected during 2024.

[Read more.](#)

Health

Up to £250 million to speed up hospital discharge

Thousands of extra medically fit patients will be discharged from hospitals into community care settings, such as care homes, over the coming weeks to free up hospital beds and reduce pressure on the NHS, the Health and Social Care Secretary, Steve Barclay, announced this week.

The government will make available up to £200 million of additional funding to immediately buy short-term care placements to allow people to be discharged safely from hospitals into the community where they will receive the care they need to recover before returning to their homes.

The move will free up hospital beds so people can be admitted more quickly from A&E to wards, reducing pressure on emergency departments and speeding up ambulance handovers. There are currently around 13,000 people occupying hospital beds in England who are fit to be discharged.

[Read more.](#)

New hiring toolkit supports care providers with safer recruitment

A first-of-its-kind Better Hiring Toolkit has been launched, providing an essential guide for care sector employers to make informed, safer recruitment decisions.

The best practice toolkit provides simplified guidance to support employers with both obtaining and providing effective references and conduct information.

With social care staff and volunteers providing support for some of the most vulnerable people in society, the toolkit is focused upon the safety of the people employers are entrusted to care for and the staff who carry out their roles.

[Read more.](#)

Cost of Living

The government unveils new “Energy Bills Discount Scheme” for businesses

A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector has been confirmed, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

This will help businesses locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.

The new scheme therefore strikes a balance between supporting businesses over the next 12 months and limiting taxpayer’s exposure to volatile energy markets, with a cap set at £5.5 billion. This provides long term certainty for businesses and reflects how the scale of the challenge has changed since September last year.

[Read more.](#)

Cost of living boost for students

Students in need are to benefit from additional financial support designed to ease cost of living pressures and help them to meet everyday costs whilst they are completing their studies.

In recognition of the challenges some students have faced due to the global rise in inflation, the government has announced that it will provide an additional £15 million in hardship funding this financial year so that universities can provide extra support to students that need it most.

It builds on the £261 million that the government has already provided to the Office for Students (OfS) for the 2022/23 academic year which universities can draw upon to boost their own hardship funds.

Universities are responsible for ensuring students who need help get the support they need, including through their own hardship funds, or through bursaries and scholarships.

[Read more.](#)

Migration

LA Grants for Ukrainians and Afghans: Local Authority Housing Fund

The Local Authority Housing Fund prospectus has been released and authorities have now received their allocation from DLUHC.

The Local Authority Housing Fund (‘LAHF’) is a £500m capital grant fund for councils in England to obtain housing for those fleeing conflicts (including in Ukraine and Afghanistan). The fund can be used to buy housing stock, build new homes, convert existing non-residential properties, and refurbish delapidated housing or empty homes into accommodation for families.

Eligible authorities have until 25th January to confirm if they intend to participate.

[Read more about the LAHF.](#)

EMC Leadership

Chair: Cllr Martin Hill OBE

Vice Chair: Cllr Sarah Russell

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

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