

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

## Top items this week

14 JANUARY 2022



Operation Warm Welcome:  
progress update



Planning Pilots  
Announced



Apprentice of the Year 2022



EMC Events for Councillors  
and Officers

## Urban and deprived areas among those chosen for planning pilots, with two pilots in the East Midlands

11 councils are to receive funding to boost engagement and participation in neighbourhood planning. The pilots involve neighbourhood planning, which was introduced by the Localism Act and gives communities power to shape the development of their area. This includes choosing where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, what these new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has allocated up to £45,000 to 7 areas as part of its Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning pilot for schemes that will make it easier for communities to set out their priorities for development.

The government has also awarded up to £50,000 to 4 councils from the Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Underrepresented Areas. This will go towards initiatives that give additional support to residents to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, which must be used by a local authority when determining planning applications.

The schemes allocated funding are as follows:

**Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Underrepresented Areas**—details [here](#).

**Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning pilot**, including two pilots in the East Midlands;

- **Harborough District Council:** The project will create more neighbourhood planning forums in areas that currently have low take-up and get more communities involved.
- **Bassetlaw District Council:** Bassetlaw will introduce a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning.

Further information available from [here](#).

## National effort to vaccinate vulnerable communities receives funding boost

- Councils with low vaccine uptake awarded share of £22.5 million to get hard-to-reach communities vaccinated
- 60 councils to benefit from [Community Vaccine Champions scheme](#), including 4 in the East Midlands

The funding, allocated this week to 60 councils, will provide an opportunity to deliver bespoke projects in their region, help identify barriers to accessing accurate information and provide tailored support, such as phone calls for people without easy access to digital technology, helplines, and linking to GP surgeries as well as other initiatives, including:

- In Derby roving vaccinators and a vaccine bus will visit workplaces, places of worship and local highstreets.

According to NHS statistics, over 4.6 million people aged 18 or older remained unvaccinated in the 60 local authorities selected to take part in the Community Vaccine Champions programme.

**Regions being funded and breakdowns** - Of the 60 local authorities selected, those local authorities (22) which received funding for the first Community Champions programme were eligible for a £185,000 top up grant from the Community Vaccine Champions programme. Those local authorities which didn't receive funding from the first Community Champions programme (38) were entitled to bid for up to £485,000 from the Community Vaccine Champions programme. Further information [here](#).

In the East Midlands - £1,640,000 awarded in funding for;

- Boston £185,000
- Derby £485,000
- Leicester £485,000
- Nottingham £485,000

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## Infrastructure, Planning & Housing



**Midlands Connect January 2022 Newsletter** - the latest edition of the Midlands Connect newsletter is available from [here](#). The edition includes;

- Consultation on the Nottingham-Lincoln line launched
- Midland Connect's first electric vehicle conference in March
- Midlands Connect's new Strategic Transport Plan to be released at annual conference

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## Asylum Support, Refugee Resettlement



**Operation Warm Welcome: progress update** - [Operation Warm Welcome](#) is a significant cross-government effort, working with local authorities, NGOs and the commercial sector, and will continue over the coming months to ensure those evacuated from Afghanistan can settle permanently, contribute to their communities and rebuild their lives here in the UK. Over 15,000 people were evacuated from Afghanistan during Operation Pitting, and around 1,500 people have been helped to enter the UK since the evacuation. This is in addition to around 2,000 people who arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) between the end of June 2021 and when Operation Pitting began on 14 August.

As of 6 January 2022, the latest available data shows there are over 12,000 people in around 80 bridging hotels. While work is ongoing to resettle families permanently as quickly as possible, they are receiving wraparound support. For example:

- all Afghan arrivals are being supported to register with a GP
- COVID-19 vaccines are being offered
- all children of school age who arrived during Operation Pitting have been enrolled in schools

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has helped those in bridging accommodation who are eligible to claim relevant benefits including Universal Credit and State Pension Credit.

Homes have already been provided for more than 4,000 Afghans who arrived in the UK before, during, and after Operation Pitting. Over 300 local authorities have pledged to resettle families so far, and the government continues to work at pace alongside local authorities and the private rented sector to secure more permanent homes.

To access the full announcement please click [here](#). For more information on Operation Warm Welcome, please contact Hannah Smith, Resettlement Policy Officer ([Hannah.smith@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.smith@emcouncils.gov.uk))

**First family resettled under Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)** - The UK has now formally opened the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme [details [here](#)], and the first Afghan family has been granted indefinite leave to remain under the scheme. The ACRS is one of the most ambitious resettlement programmes in the world, and the first bespoke scheme in Europe to begin resettling Afghan evacuees. The ACRS, part of the government's New Plan for Immigration, will provide up to 20,000 Afghan citizens with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK in the coming years. It prioritises those who assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech and the rule of law – as well as at-risk women, girls, and members of minority groups. This is in addition to evacuated British nationals, and the more than 7,000 people who have been relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Three bespoke referral pathways under the ACRS will enable Afghan nationals to resettle and thrive in the UK:

- Beginning this month, the first to be resettled will include some of those already evacuated to the UK, including women's rights activists, journalists, prosecutors, and Afghan family members of British nationals.
- From Spring, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will refer refugees to the scheme, based on assessments of protection need.

In Year One, the third pathway will resettle individuals who supported the UK and international community effort in Afghanistan, including those British Council and Garda World contractors and Chevening alumni who are most at risk.

Councils receive a generous funding deal to help them deliver this support, with £20,520 per person provided over three years, with additional funding for children entering education, English language provision, and healthcare.

To access the full announcement please click [here](#). For more information relating to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, please contact Hannah Smith, Resettlement Policy Officer ([Hannah.smith@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.smith@emcouncils.gov.uk)).

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## Climate Change & Sustainable Development

**Local government and the path to net zero: government response to the Select Committee report** - This is the government's response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee's report on [local government and the path to net zero](#) published on 29 October 2021 [details [here](#)].

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## Health & Social Care



**Levelling Up Committee question the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** - The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee held a one-off evidence session with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Michael King, this week on 10th January.

**Purpose of the session** - Mr King leads the body that hears complaints from members of the public about the range of services provided by local authorities in England, as well as adult social care services that are registered with the Care Quality Commission.

The cross-party group of MPs questioned the Ombudsman on a range of issues that were highlighted in his organisation's Triennial Review, published in December [details [here](#)].

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## Local Government News



**Reforming revenues - options for the future financing of local government** - The LGA commissioned WPI Economics to carry out a review of the current and alternative sources of local government revenue financing and an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses against the principles set out by the LGA: sufficiency, buoyancy, fairness, efficiency of collection, predictability, transparency and incentive.

The overarching purpose of the report is to contribute to the debate on a sustainable local government finance system, particularly following the funding announcements and finance reforms announced in the 2021 Budget and Spending Review [details [here](#)].

**Public-Private Partnerships: Driving Growth, Building Resilience** - The LGA has commissioned Partnering Regeneration Development and Newbridge Advisors to produce this good practice guide. It aims to support councils to plan and establish more effective public-private partnerships, which can deliver the investment, development and services that are essential to boosting economic growth and recovery [details [here](#)].

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## Employers' Information



**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 officers will explain what T Levels are and how the work placements will operate. For further information visit [here](#).

**Apprentice of the Year 2022, Save the date Wednesday 25 May 2022** - The Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2022 event will be taking place virtually on 25 May 2022 all day, with a one-hour awards ceremony the following morning to celebrate all the successes from the day. Save the dates in your diaries to ensure your council doesn't miss out! Further information available from [here](#).

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## EMC Events



**IOM UK Afghanistan: Geography, History, Experiences in Conflict (and Displacement) and Services**, 8 Feb 2022, 14:00 - This session's content will focus primarily on the geography and history of Afghanistan, as well as Afghan's experiences in conflict. The session will also look at the services (including education and health care) Afghans may be used to and their expectations around accessing those services in Afghanistan. [details [here](#)].

**IOM UK Afghanistan: Cultural Norms, Family and Social Life**, 9 Feb 2022, 14:00 - This session's content will focus primarily on Afghan cultural norms, practices, family and social life [details [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 Rob Parker  
Lib Dem Group: Cllr David Bill MBE  
Independent Group: Cllr Jason Zadrozny  
Executive Director: Stuart Young

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