

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

Top items this week

25 MARCH 2022

Cyber Security workshop  
for Councillors

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Ukrainian Refugees

The Role of the Civic Head,  
31 May 2022

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and Officers

## UK Support for Ukrainian Refugees

The UK support programme for Ukrainian refugees, in effect, comprises the Ukrainian Family Scheme (UFS) and a sponsored humanitarian visa route (Homes for Ukraine). To date, over 160,000 expressions of interest have been registered. On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Government published [guidance](#) for councils on the sponsorship route although there remain many issues to be worked through.

**Role of councils** - Councils have a number of important functions in supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme, specifically in relation to:

**Initial reception.** Relevant councils have been asked to establish reception arrangements and provide welcome packs.

**Data sharing.** Unitary and county councils will receive the necessary data from DLUHC about sponsors/guests who have applied for visas (including the accommodation address). County councils can pass this data on to the relevant district councils.

**Safeguarding checks.** The sponsor guidance makes clear that prospective sponsors will be subject to accommodation and safeguarding checks. The checks outlined below must be conducted as soon as possible after the council has been alerted that a visa application has been made.

**Interim payment for guest.** The council where the sponsor accommodation is located should provide an interim payment (in line with other resettlement schemes) of £200 per guest for subsistence costs.

**Provision of education.** Councils are required to provide school places for children of school age. Councils will be paid additional funding to support with this.

**Service referrals.** Where necessary, councils should provide advice and referrals to specialist public health services as appropriate e.g., mental health services, adult social care, and children's services.

**Work and Benefits.** Councils should support guests to access local Jobcentre Plus appointments for benefit assessments and job-seeking.

**Homelessness assistance.** There may be some cases where the sponsor/guest relationship breaks down and the guest is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Councils' statutory homelessness duties will apply in this instance.

**Community integration.** Councils will play a key role in supporting the integration of Ukrainian families into their local communities.

**Administering payments to sponsors.** Sponsors will be eligible for an optional 'thank you payment' of £350 per month, as long as the sponsorship arrangement exists, for up to 12 months in total. Councils will administer these 'thank you' payments to sponsors. This payment will be tax free and should not affect the sponsor's entitlement to benefits or council tax status.

### Funding for councils

- Councils will be funded at a rate of £10,500 per person to enable them to provide support to families. The £10,500 for Ukrainian nationals is for the first year. Funding for future years remains to be determined.
- This funding will be un-ringfenced, with a number of conditions attached, and will match the tariff offered under the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).
- The government is also providing additional funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme.

### Future guidance

- The initial guidance will be updated and expanded with further detail anticipated on accommodation and safeguarding checks, wraparound support including post-16 education, employment and training, administration of funds, fallback accommodation and data management.
- Eligibility for the scheme requires a named sponsor. The scheme will subsequently be expanded to enable organisations and community groups to sponsor multiple guests.
- We cannot be clear at this stage on actual numbers and whether there will be a gentle curve of applications being received and resettled, or whether the curve will be steeper. We will, of course, keep councils updated.

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## EMC News

**East Midlands Virtual Information Exchange** - EMC have arranged a virtual information exchange on 6<sup>th</sup> May from 10.00am-11.30am on the topic of developing internal capacity. This area of work has been identified as one of EMC's work priorities for this year and we hope that you will find this exchange beneficial.

The session will have input from Paul Brookes from Chelmsford City Council who will update you on how their authority has used apprenticeships to help solve a recruitment crisis. Christine Sarris from Ashfield District Council has also agreed to talk about her experiences of how the authority have grown their own Planners [details [here](#)].

## EMC Councillor Events

**The Role of the Civic Head, 31 May 2022** - EMC is hosting a one day workshop for incoming Civic Heads. The intended audience for this event will be this coming into civic office at their Annual Meetings at the end of May, their deputies and their support staff. **How to book** – visit [here](#). This interactive workshop will explore;

- Expectations from a range of perspectives, including; yours as incoming Mayor/Chair, the public's and the council's; measures of success for your terms of office; skills and qualities of a great civic head; and short introductory sessions touching upon; chairing Full Council, public speaking and social media

**Cyber Security workshop for Councillors in the East Midlands** - EMC, working collaboratively with the East Midlands Special Operations Unit is hosting two free webinar for Councillors on cyber security.

Cyber Security is the protection of your hardware, software and data from unauthorised access and cyber-attacks. We recognise the value and responsibility you bring to our communities as a councillor, with this in mind we want to ensure that you have strong cyber security protection available to you. With the current news around global conflicts, we are seeing a real increase in targeted cybercrime, to combat this, we will cover topics around securing your digital footprint, securing your social media, how to work in public using technology and practical tips. You will gain a broad understanding of what additional services law enforcement can offer you! Hear from East Midlands Special Operations Cyber Protect Officers on the latest threats and on **Dates and times**- 27 May 2022, 10am - 11am or 8 June 2022, 3pm - 4pm (Virtual workshop using MS Teams). To book a place please use the online booking form available [here](#).

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## Infrastructure, Planning & Housing

**Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands** - The government's plan for delivering and sequencing major rail investment in the North and Midlands. The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) sets out the government's proposals to transform the rail network in the North and Midlands.

It is a £96 billion plan that outlines how major rail projects, including HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Rail Hub, will be delivered sooner than previous plans so that communities, towns and cities across the North and Midlands are better connected with more frequent, reliable and greener services and faster journey times [details [here](#)].

**Levelling Up Fund Round 2: Prospectus** - The prospectus provides guidance on how local areas can submit bids for the Levelling Up Fund. The Levelling Up Fund is designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. The £4.8 billion fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets [details [here](#)].

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## Housing

**Levelling Up Committee publishes exempt accommodation written evidence** - On Monday 28 March, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee begins the formal public evidence hearing for its **inquiry into exempt accommodation** – a type of supported housing that is exempt from Housing Benefit rules limiting rents to particular levels [details [here](#)].

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## Climate Change & Sustainable Development

**Tenfold expansion in chargepoints by 2030** - New strategy to improve the consumer experience at chargepoints significantly supports people without access to off-street parking and provides fast charging for longer journeys [[here](#)].

**Project launched to support EV chargepoint infrastructure rollout** - This project will support the approach set out in the government's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, published by the Department for Transport, which focuses on enabling the rollout of a robust EV charging infrastructure network by 2030. Setting out a vision and approach for EV infrastructure roll-out and expectations of key stakeholders, the Strategy identifies that addressing barriers to data sharing will be important to enable decision making [details [here](#)].

**Green finance supports regional decarbonisation, but more required** - A new report from the Midlands Engine Observatory looks at what green finance is already available, and what might be needed in the future. Through interviewing innovation leads, business relationship managers, fund managers, and officers at regional Growth Hubs and LEPS, the report shows that many businesses are aware of the Net Zero agenda. An increasing number of businesses are seeking to invest in green technologies, but levels of investment remain low [details [here](#)].

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## Climate Change & Sustainable Development

**Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool updates and scope 3 emissions webinar, Thursday 28 April 2022, 10.00am** - The Tool has proven popular with local authorities for their emissions reporting since its launch in 2020. This webinar will discuss the improvements and changes to the tool, as well as providing guidance on Scope 3 emissions reporting [details [here](#)].

**Funding for tree planting: Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) and Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) now open** - The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has allocated over £9 million of funding to support tree planting efforts and to improve the environment for future generations. Local authorities can apply for both funds and a blog post on the Forestry Commission's website can help you understand if you should apply for one, or both. The deadline for applications is the 31 May 2022, to find out more about the funds please visit the [LATF webpage](#) and [UTCF webpage](#).

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## Health & Social Care

**Public health in local government: celebrating 10 years of transformation** - This year's tenth LGA public health annual report reflects on 10 years of public health in local government and looks forward to the opportunities and challenges of the coming years [details [here](#)].

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## Local Government News

**Lincolnshire County Council: creating strategic alliances for employment and skills challenges (case study available from the LGA)** - Lincolnshire County Council are faced with the challenge of working across a large and dispersed county. By creating strategic alliances, they have developed provision that enables them to meet their skills and employment challenges. This case study examines the current system, and what is needed to improve outcomes for the local community [details [here](#)].

**Changing Places Fund: allocation of funding following Round 1 assessment** - List of unitary and district councils across England that have been allocated funding to increase the number and spread of Changing Places Toilet facilities. Following the outcome of the Round 1 assessment process the government has announced that 191 unitary and district councils across England have been allocated £23.5 million of funding to increase the number and spread of Changing Places Toilet facilities across England [details [here](#)]. Allocation information [here](#).

**Approaches to meeting: learning lessons from the pandemic** - This Centre for Governance and Scrutiny publication aims to review experiences of remote meetings during the pandemic—in particular, the impact on behaviours, and to apply those to the design of hybrid meeting arrangements. This guide explore the practical circumstances governing hybrid meetings and sets out possible approaches to managing them in a fair, transparent and proportionate way [details [here](#)].

**LGA Sector Wide £1M Cyber Skills Uplift** - The LGA has been awarded an additional £1M of funding from the National Cyber Security Programme to deliver a sector-wide cyber security qualifications uplift. The LGA is now inviting all councils to apply for grant funding for an officer to undertake a professionally certified cyber security qualification. To apply for funding please fill out this application form. The deadline for applications is Friday 1 April, 5pm [details [here](#)].

**Polling on resident satisfaction with councils: Round 31, February 2022** - This report presents the results of the thirty-first round of polling conducted in February 2022 [details [here](#)].

**Elections Bill** The Elections Bill delivers the government's manifesto commitment to strengthen the integrity of elections and ensure that our democracy remains secure, fair, modern and transparent [details [here](#)].

**'Government failure to learn pandemic lessons will come at high cost to generations' Public Accounts Committee** - In its report the Public Accounts Committee says the "UK government was underprepared for a pandemic like COVID-19" which has "exposed limitations in how the government manages risks" and also a "failure to learn", from both simulation exercises and actual incidents [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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