

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

Top items this week

31 MARCH 2023



East Midlands
Freeport Given the
Green Light



Asylum Seekers to be
Accommodated on
Surplus Military Sites



Eurovision Ballot
opens for displaced
Ukrainians



East Midlands
Infrastructure
Partnership Seminar

EAST MIDLANDS FREEPORT GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT

Yesterday, the Government announced that East Midlands Freeport has been given formal approval to open for business.

As part of the announcement, world-leading space research centre Space Park Leicester was given the green light by the Government to become a customs site operator for EM Freeport, bolstering the Freeport's focus on driving innovation and skills.

Centred around East Midlands Airport, the country's largest dedicated cargo airport, EMF offers unrivalled UK access to air, rail and road links, connecting businesses and customs sites to national and global markets.

The Freeport is set to create thousands of new high quality jobs in the region and boost the East Midlands' economy by £8.4bn, will also create trade hubs to drive the low carbon and renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and advanced logistics sectors as well as support investment in research and development.

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AFGHAN BRIDGING HOTELS ANNOUNCEMENT

This week, the Home Office announced that it will be writing to Afghans from the end of April (after Ramadan), to say they will need to move out of bridging hotels. In the East Midlands there are currently five hotels and one serviced apartment, with an approximate total of 505 Afghan residents.

They will be given three months to relocate, and there will be DLUHC/DWP case worker teams to provide support in moving to other accommodation. The process of ending hotel use and rehousing Afghans is expected to be completed by 'Autumn'.

Alongside the announcement, the Home Office will be providing £35 million in new funding for councils to assist Afghans living in temporary bridging accommodation in the UK find settled accommodation.

There will also be £2.5m in funding for local authorities and VCS to support finding accommodation (and potential for regional case worker teams), £250m within the second round of the Local Authority Housing Fund, (this time specifically for housing of the Afghan cohort), as well as additional funding to support any homelessness pressures.

Additional guidance will be published shortly, and the EMC team will work with regional colleagues as these proposals are rolled out.

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ASYLUM SEEKERS TO BE ACCOMMODATED ON SURPLUS MILITARY SITES

RAF Scampton has been identified as a site to accommodate asylum seekers who enter the UK illegally on small boats, the government has announced.

On Wednesday, Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, set out an update on the ongoing work being done across government to secure more appropriate, cost-effective accommodation options around the country, with the number of people requiring accommodation in hotels currently costing £6 million a day.

RAF Scampton, along with RAF Wethersfield in Essex will act as this alternative accommodation. The sites will house asylum seekers in former barracks and modular accommodation with healthcare provision in place, catering facilities on site and 24/7 security.

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NEW SETTLEMENT ROUTE FOR HONG KONG VETERANS

Hundreds of Hong Kongers who served in the British armed forces will be able to apply to settle in the UK, in recognition of their military service in the 20th century.

The government's new Hong Kong Veterans Settlement route will be open to all servicemen and women who served in the British military prior to 1 July 1997 and their family members, including a partner or spouse and dependant children. Applications for settlement are expected to open this autumn.

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EUROVISION BALLOT OPENS FOR DISPLACED UKRAINIANS

Individuals on the Homes for Ukraine, Ukraine Family, and Ukraine Extension visa schemes can now apply for up to two tickets to attend this year's Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool.

The ballot is open until 4pm on Thursday 6 April. Entries after this date will not be accepted.

The UK Government is subsidising these tickets. If successful in the ballot, individuals will only pay £20 per ticket.

To apply, individuals will need to complete the form below. They will also need to upload a photo or scan of their biometric residence permit.

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ESOL & EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIANS

Pre-Tender Market Engagement is now underway as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities seeks to find a single Potential Provider to increase access to suitable & employment support for Ukrainians.

The deadline for responses is next Tuesday, 4 April 2023.

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EAST MIDLANDS INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP SEMINAR

Wednesday, 19 April 2023

Jubilee Conference Centre, Jubilee Campus, Triumph Road, Nottingham, England, NG7 2TU

This seminar brings together key stakeholders from the National Infrastructure Commission, ADEPT and the transport, water and energy sectors to discuss how to improve cross-sector infrastructure planning and prioritisation so that ultimately, every person in the East Midlands has access to the infrastructure they need to survive and thrive.

The session includes case studies covering UK Fusion Reactor, the Newark Northern Bypass, Digital Twins and the Boston Barrier.

East Midlands Councils' Director of Policy and Infrastructure, Andrew Pritchard, will be co-chairing the event.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF VOTER IDENTIFICATION

DLUHC will be providing a one-off implementation grant of £700k spread across councils with polls in May in response to concerns about resource pressures. This is a non-ringfenced grant paid alongside the next New Burdens grant in April, which Returning Officers may use at their discretion.

New Burdens Funding to support the implementation of voter identification and accessibility measures was also provided in November 2022, including an extra £4.75m provided to those with elections this May for local engagement with electors.

Councils who do not have polls this May, and who will therefore be implementing voter identification for the first time in 2024, will receive an additional implementation grant of a further £500k between them, ahead of the May 2024 polls.

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UPCOMING EMC EVENTS

[IOM UK: IRAQ: GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, CURRENT EVENTS AND CULTURAL NORMS](#)

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Independent Group: Cllr Jason Zadrozny
Executive Director: Stuart Young



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