

Appendix to Policy Committee Report

East Midlands Councils Update

1. Background

- 1.1 East Midlands Councils is the membership organisation for the region's local authorities. It is a voluntary membership body that focuses on issues of significance and common priorities for councils in the East Midlands and where a collective approach is likely to be effective.
- 1.2 It also provides training and development programmes for councillors and staff of councils in EMC membership (at no additional or marginal cost), access to low-cost services and consultancy, e.g. recruitment and HR, and governance and organisational change support.
- 1.3 Nottinghamshire County Council is a leading member council of EMC and two councillors are members of EMC:
- Cllr Alan Rhodes (member of EMC Executive Board).
 - Cllr Kay Cutts (member of the Regional Migration Board).
- 1.4 EMC also hosts lead members networks for 'portfolio holders' of Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.5 The following policy report focus on the key areas of:
- a) Asylum and refugee resettlement programmes
 - b) Economic Growth and Infrastructure
 - c) Employment Policy (Apprenticeship Proposals)
- 1.6 EMC welcomes the advice of Nottinghamshire County Council on these and any other matters of policy development and delivery.

2. Asylum and Refugee Support Programmes in the East Midlands

- 2.1 The main asylum and refugee support programmes in the East Midlands are:
- a) Asylum Seeker Dispersal
 - b) The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
 - c) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
 - d) Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme
 - e) Lord Dub's Amendment

a) Asylum Seeker Dispersal

- 2.2 In July 2015 there were 2500 supported asylum seekers in the East Midlands, at the end of April 2016, this number had increased to just under 2850.
- 2.3 Asylum seekers are located in 6 areas across the East Midlands; with approximately 800 in Derby City, 1050 in Leicester City, 1000 in Nottingham City and 3 in Broxtowe. Oadby & Wigston and Gedling Borough Councils have also recently agreed to become asylum dispersal areas.
- 2.4 The number of asylum seekers remains uneven across the country with areas in the north and midlands accommodating the majority of asylum seekers in urban centres of population. The latest information on the dispersal of asylum seekers supported under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 can be found at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2016/asylum
- 2.5 In order to reduce pressure on existing dispersal areas (particularly Derby, Leicester and Nottingham) and the COMPASS contract accommodation providers (G4S in the East Midlands); the Government wishes to widen dispersal beyond the existing areas. EMC continues to work with individual councils that are considering their participation in this programme.
- 2.6 Alongside this, the East Midlands has put the case for a fairer distribution of asylum seekers across the UK for some time and that local authorities should be properly consulted about how and where asylum seekers are housed.
- 2.7 The Asylum and Immigration Act 1999, and its provisions, were implemented with the intention and purpose of ensuring that asylum seekers were dispersed across the UK. Members are advised that the Act makes direct provision for the Secretary of State to provide support for those claiming asylum and to instruct the cooperation and support of local authorities in doing so. While there is no immediate risk of Government mandating support, concerns remains that unless sufficient numbers of local authorities consent to becoming an asylum dispersal area, the power to impose asylum dispersal may be invoked.

b) Syrian Resettlement Programme (The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme)

- 2.8 The Government has expanded the existing Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and intends to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament. Phase 1 of the Scheme operated until 31st December 2015 and 98 Syrian refugees were resettled in the East Midlands in Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire (Mansfield, Gedling and Broxtowe) and Leicester.
- 2.9 The Government has issued a grant agreement to East Midlands Councils to deliver a regional coordination model that builds on existing structures and partnership arrangements in order to effectively deliver Phase 2 of the scheme.
- 2.10 In the East Midlands; Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Leicester City and Nottingham City Councils have confirmed their interest in participating in Phase 2. The remaining upper-tier councils have highlighted reservations due to concerns with funding for the scheme and the interplay with other migration pressures specifically unaccompanied minors and asylum seeker dispersal.
- 2.11 Across the East Midlands, councils have pledged a further potential 950 places over 21 local authority areas. This figure continues to be revised upwards as more authorities commit firm numbers. A number of other local authorities have made a firm commitment to participate but are continuing to assess the capacity within their local housing markets before identifying numbers.
- 2.12 A recent flight of 41 Syrian refugee arrivals were accommodated in Nottingham, Leicester and Rushcliffe local authority areas. A further flight is scheduled to arrive at the end of August 2016 with arrivals planned for Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 2.13 The Government has also announced its intention to pursue a Community Sponsorship scheme. This was a commitment made by the Home Secretary building on offers of support to allow individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugees directly. While the Local Authority must give its consent, Members are advised of concerns that there remains potential for this scheme to incur costs to local authorities.

c) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- 2.14 Government wrote to councils on 13th May 2016 with information on the resettlement scheme for unaccompanied children, which includes the resettlement of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), children deemed at risk from countries around Syria and children from other European countries into the UK.
- 2.15 From 1st July until 31st March 2017, local authorities will receive enhanced daily rates for UASC: £114 for under 16 year olds, £91 for 16-17 year olds and £200 for former UASC leaving care. The current daily rates are £95 for under 16 year olds, £71 for 16 - 17 year olds and local authorities supporting more than 25 former UASC care leavers receive £150 per week.
- 2.16 The new transfer scheme will be built on each region taking a proportion of UASC in relation to their current looked after child population, with no region expected to take in excess of 0.07%. The rate will take into account existing UASC populations, and individual local authorities can take more than their proportion. EMC continues to lobby the Home Office on the issue that the agreed levels of UASC transfers should also factor in existing commitments of local authorities, e.g. asylum dispersal and Syrian resettlement.
- 2.17 Directors of Children's Services and EMC developed a draft protocol to support an equitable and efficient transfer process, ensuring the region and no individual council exceeds the 0.07% threshold. Each upper-tier council committed to take these proposals through its local decision-making process. In the development of these arrangements, EMC is grateful to the advice and support provided by Colin Pettigrew, as lead representative of Directors of Children's Services.
- 2.18 The East Midlands (through DCSs and EMC) has confirmed that the region is willing to take part in the national transfer scheme, subject to individual Local Authority agreement, and to date 16 UASC have been transferred to the region (or in-region from Northamptonshire).
- 2.19 The Home Office has acknowledged the East Midlands as the exemplar region for the efficacy of its response and the partnership approach between children's services and EMC. However, it is clear that the transfer scheme is not currently 'national' but involves a limited number of regions, and within those regions, a limited number of local authorities. Whilst the pressures in Kent are understood, EMC has advised the Home Office to take action to gain active participation from a greater number of regions to share the numbers of referrals more equitably.

- 2.20 EMC has made clear to the Home Office that the scheme remains voluntary and while the local authorities are committed to the scheme, this should not oblige councils in this region accepting a disproportionately high responsibility and that local authorities reserve the right to decline proposed transfers, particularly if it is felt not to be in the best interests of the child.
- 2.21 The Home Office has confirmed funding support will be available to pay for additional administrative and wider support in managing this scheme.

d) Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (The '3000' Announcement)

- 2.22 Announced by the Immigration Minister on 21st April 2016 following consultations with Local Authorities, UNHCR, The International Office for Migration, and other international organisations/NGOs.
- 2.23 This scheme relates to the commitment to resettle up to 3000 people over the life of the Parliament under the Children at Risk category. The Government's intention is to 'resettle several hundred in the first year'.
- 2.24 Following recommendations from UNHCR the scheme will not target unaccompanied children alone, but will be extended to children at risk, as defined by UNHCR. This will encompass unaccompanied, accompanied and separated children, and other vulnerable children such as those facing the risk of child labour, forced marriage, child carers and other forms of abuse and exploitation.
- 2.25 This new resettlement scheme will be open to all children, deemed by UNHCR to be 'at risk' within the Middle-East, North Africa Region (so not just Syrian).
- 2.26 Children will be resettled with their family members or carers where appropriate and where UNHCR deems the resettlement is in the child's best interest.
- 2.27 All those resettled will have a refugee determination from UNHCR and will be granted 5 years Humanitarian Protection (as is the case for those resettled under the Syrian Resettlement Programme)

- 2.28 For those arriving as unaccompanied (lone) children, Government proposes to use the national allocation mechanism and funding in line with UASC transfer rates.
- 2.29 For families and children resettled with adults, Government proposes to use the tariff rate as per the Syrian Resettlement Programme.
- 2.30 The first arrivals (into the UK) are expected in October 2016. Government is asking local government to make offers for support to this scheme.

e) Lord Dubs' Amendment

- 2.31 On 4th May 2016 the Government announced that it would accept Lord Dubs' amendment to the Immigration Bill and will resettle unaccompanied children from within Europe, specifically Greece, Italy and France with the number of children supported under this scheme to be agreed in partnership with local authorities.
- 2.32 The Immigration Act asks Government to consult with local authorities to consider how many children could be supported under the amendment.

f) Governance

- 2.33 In order to meet its responsibilities, EMC has agreed revised governance arrangements that has put in place a local government decision-making board that includes representatives from all local authorities that participate in the asylum and refugee programmes. Its roles include to:
 - a) Agree and oversee arrangements that include asylum dispersal, Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement (SVPR) Programme and the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs), as well as children resettled directly from the Middle East and North Africa region and other related refugee programmes.
 - b) Ensure strong local government involvement and influence on programme management and service delivery for asylum seekers and refugees at regional and local level.
 - c) Make recommendations to Government and regional/local partners on matters relating to overall regional numbers of dispersed asylum seekers,

dispersal cluster areas and cluster numbers, UASC and Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme.

- d) Monitor the impact of migration on community cohesion, housing, education, employment, health and other services.

2.34 The Board has the following membership:

Cllr Richard Jackson	Broxtowe Borough Council
Cllr Brian Murray-Carr	Bolsover District Council
Cllr Paul Gleeson	Boston Borough Council
Cllr Asif Azal	Derby City Council
Cllr John Clarke	Gedling Borough Council
Dep. Mayor Rory Palmer	Leicester City Council
Cllr Peter Robinson	Lincolnshire County Council
Mayor Kate Allsop	Mansfield District Council
Cllr Heather Smith (Chair)	Northamptonshire County Council
Cllr David Liversidge	Nottingham City Council
Cllr Kay Cutts MBE	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr John Boyce	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Cllr Patricia Bradwell	Lincolnshire County Council (Lead Member Adult Social Care/Children's Services)
Cllr Ernie White	Leicestershire County Council (Lead Member – Health and Wellbeing Boards)

And will be supported by the following senior officer advisor group:

- Lead Officer for East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (East Midlands Councils)
- SOLACE Lead Chief Executive for SVPR programme.
- 1 Director Children's Services
- 1 Director Adult Social Services
- 1 Director of Public Health
- Executive Director (East Midlands Councils)

3. Economic Growth and Infrastructure

a) Midlands Engine

- 3.1 Sir John Peace has now taken over as Chair of the Midlands Engine, and will combine this with his existing role as Chair of the Midlands Connect

partnership. Sir John outlined his approach to both roles at the EMC AGM which took place in early July at Nottinghamshire County Council.

- 3.2 The Midlands Engine Senior Steering Group met on 21st July 2016 and agreed to focus activity initially on Midlands Connect (see below), trade missions and promotions – particularly on the run up to the 2016 Party Conferences.

b) Midlands Connect

- 3.3 Following successful meetings in July 2016 of the Midlands Connect Strategic Board and Partnership Board, at which Rt. Hon Chris Grayling MP made his first speech as the new Secretary of State for Transport, the 'Picking up the Pace' report was launched and is available at:

https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/media/1070/mc_picking-up-the-pace_report_110716_final.pdf

- 3.4 In summary:

- The Midlands has an economy of over £240bn per year and accounts for 17% of all UK exports selling to over 178 countries worldwide.
- The Midlands has a strong advanced manufacturing and engineering base which employs over 600,000 people and accounts for 22.5% of the UK's manufacturing output.
- One in three businesses may re-locate if transport issues continue or get worse. This rises to almost one in two in the professional services sector.
- Our work so far has shown that transport investment could create 300,000 new jobs, improve productivity by £1.1bn per annum and save businesses £0.5bn per annum.
- The Midlands Connect Strategy will set out a programme of transformational transport investment to power the Midlands Engine, addressing this and opening up new opportunities for sustained economic growth.
- We are embedding Midlands Connect in the development of future investment programmes by both Highways England and Network Rail ensuring the potential to unlock economic growth is at the heart of decision making.
- Making the case to Government for targeted development funding will enable us to continue to advance business case and feasibility work on our key priorities from April 2017. This will send a clear message to the market as part of the Midlands Engine for Growth offer.

- The Government is committed to supporting Midlands Connect in establishing a Sub-National Transport Body by 2018.
- 3.5 The technical elements of the work programme are progressing well and to agreed timescale, and an 'Emerging Strategy' document will be published by the end of September 2016 for consultation.
- 3.6 Further information is available at: <https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/>

c) HS2

- 3.7 A formal route announcement for the HS2 Eastern Leg is expected in November 2016. The agreement of a station solution for Sheffield removes the last major barrier to the Government to make a decision on HS2 Phase 2. The new Transport Secretary Chris Grayling reaffirmed Government support for the full HS2 network at a Midlands Connect meeting in Derby in July 2016.
- 3.8 The Government has already confirmed its support for a Hub Station serving the East Midlands located in Toton, and strongly welcomed the work of councils and business leaders through EMC's HS2 Strategic Board.
- 3.9 Policy Committee Members are reminded that the Government recently made available £1.25 million to support the development of an HS2 Growth Strategy for the East Midlands which will address connectivity and economic development issues related to both the Hub Station at Toton and the maintenance depot at Staveley. An Emerging Strategy document will be published by the end of September 2016, with the final version published in mid-2017.
- 3.10 Other notable developments include the establishment of an HS2 Executive Team, including a secondee from Nottinghamshire County Council, to drive forward the development of the Growth Strategy - with a view to moving to a development company solution once the Growth Strategy has been completed in 2017.
- 3.11 An agreement has been signed with the Government's HS2 Growth Partnership to develop a commercially focused 'investible masterplan' for the area around the Hub Station.

- 3.12 If Members wish to obtain further information and detail on HS2 matters, in particular station design principles, then the following sources will be helpful:
- http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/Final_Farrells_Report.pdf
 - http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/HS2_Hub_Station_Concept_Design.pdf
[Note option 1 as the preferred design].
 - and the general page for HS2 matters is found at <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/HS2>

d) East Midlands Rail Franchise

- 3.13 EMC is working with the relevant Local Transport Authorities to secure the necessary support to procure a joint resource to work with DfT throughout the franchise competition to maximise the benefits for the East Midlands. The revised timescales for the competition are set out below:
- Issue of Expressions of Interest Document (Prospectus): December 2016
 - Invitation to Tender: April 2017
 - Contract Award: March 2018
 - Start of New Franchise Agreement: July 2018
- 3.14 The joint resource could be supplied through a commercial consultancy, sole trader or a local authority secondee. The closing date for tender submissions is the 31st August 2016. Further details at: <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/News/Tenders>.
- 3.15 The project covers a period of up to 18 months and is an important opportunity to work as a partner to DfT on the development of the entire franchise specification and on the assessment of tenders from an East Midlands perspective.
- 3.16 Once the franchise has been awarded, there is also the potential to nominate an East Midlands member representative to the DfT Project Board that will oversee the franchise.

4. Employment Policy

a) Apprenticeship Proposals Update

- 4.1 The Government announced their proposals for apprenticeship funding on 12th August 2016. The latest information and associated links are set out at point 4.3 below.
- 4.2 EMC will co-ordinate a regional response to the proposals and councils are asked to provide their feedback to sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk before 3rd September 2016. EMC is also arranging an event for local authority officers to meet with government officials about apprenticeships in September.
- 4.3 The information published includes:
- Proposals for apprenticeship funding in England from May 2017.
 - Proposals for a new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.
 - Guidance for employers thinking about becoming apprenticeship training providers. Apprenticeship funding [calculator](#) to help employers understand what levy they will pay and how they could use the new digital service to plan and fund training.
 - Updated guidance on the apprenticeship levy: how it will work.

All documents can be found on-line [here](#), and the survey for feeding back views on the funding proposals is [here](#).

- 4.4 EMC continues to work with officials in highlighting concerns of the level of apprenticeship targets and potential cost of the apprenticeship levy. Local authorities in the region remain supportive of apprenticeships but the proposals as set out above present a challenge for the sector, particularly given the context of financial pressures, the reducing workforce and the difficulties already encountered in recruiting to apprenticeships.
- 4.5 The Government aims to publish final policy details in October.

b) Councillor Development

- 4.6 Members are also reminded of the range of councillor development programmes that EMC manages and delivers in the East Midlands. These are delivered at nil or marginal cost, and focus on the policy priorities for local government and councillor skills support and development.

Stuart Young

**Executive Director
East Midlands Councils**

12th August 2016