

**Report to Policy Committee  
East Midlands Councils**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 East Midlands Councils (EMC) is the membership organisation for the region's local councils. 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, and Improvement & Transformation Board).
  - Cllr Kay Cutts (member of the Regional Migration Partnership).
- 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 areas have been agreed by the Executive Board as priority policy areas:

**2. Midlands Engine**

- 2.1 Following the Chancellor's speech in Derby on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 announcing the Midlands Engine concept, LEPs and Councils across the Midlands have been working together to develop an initial proposition that was launched in December 2015 by the Business Secretary the Rt Hon Sajid Jarvid MP.
- 2.2 The prospectus responds to Government ambitions announced earlier in 2015 that the Midlands economy could grow by £34 billion by 2030, if it matched the predicted growth rate for the UK, and that a further 300,000 jobs could be created by the end of this Parliament in the Midlands region. It is based on enhanced collaboration around five strategic areas:

- Promotion – to both domestic and foreign investors
- Transport (through Midlands Connect)
- Innovation
- Finance for business
- Skills

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/482247/midlands-engine-for-growth.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482247/midlands-engine-for-growth.pdf)

- 2.3 To deliver on these high level aspirations, councils and LEPs in this region need to be clear and agree the priority interventions for the economies in the East Midlands and, through the joint development and agreement of an implementation plan, how the Midlands Engine should support their delivery.
- 2.4 Formal governance will need to be agreed by council leaders. It is suggested that particular consideration is given to the following issues:
- Clear leadership role for local government to provide democratic legitimacy.
  - Balance between East and West Midlands to underpin collaborative working.
  - Strategic oversight through senior political leadership coupled with expert input on each theme.
  - Effective and appropriately resourced secretariat, enabling good analysis, communications and underpinning efficient decision making.
  - Avoidance of duplication with existing governance bodies.

### **3. Midlands Connect**

- 3.1 Midlands Connect is a key component of the Midlands Engine initiative, although it pre-dates its inception by 18 months. Initial work funded by LEPs demonstrated the economic potential of improving connectivity between key centres of economic activity across the Midlands.
- 3.2 Following this, the Chancellor announced in his 2015 summer budget an allocation of £5 million to support the development of a strategic transport strategy for the Midlands by March 2017 which will seek to agree key investment priorities that will boost the Midlands economy, for delivery by Highways England, Network Rail and HS2 Ltd from 2020 onwards.
- 3.3 To draw down the Government funding, LEPs and Local Transport Authorities submitted a work programme and confirmed governance structures (as agreed by EMC Executive Board). The new arrangements were formally launched at a major event at the Derby Roundhouse on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015, with Transport

Minister Robert Goodwill MP and the Executive Chairman of HS2 Ltd Sir David Higgins in attendance.

- 3.4 Sir John Peace has been confirmed as the Independent Chair of Midlands Connect.

#### **4. HS2 Update**

- 4.1 The Government published its latest HS2 command paper on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-two-east-and-west-the-next-steps-to-crewe-and-beyond>) that confirms the Government's intention to advance construction of the line to Crewe, and sets out the Government's vision for the Eastern Leg of HS2 between Birmingham, the East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Leeds.
- 4.2 A formal route announcement for the Eastern Leg will not be made until late 2016 after further detailed work on key sections of the proposed line is completed. However, the Government has confirmed its support for a Hub Station serving the East Midlands located Toton, and strongly welcomed the work of councils and business leaders through EMC's HS2 Leadership Board to secure a regional consensus on station location.
- 4.3 As a result the Government has 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. It is worth noting that similar support has not yet been made available to South Yorkshire (where there is no consensus on station location), or Leeds (where further technical work is required on the revised station proposal).

#### **5. East Midlands Infrastructure Priorities for 2015.**

- 5.1 At the EMC AGM in July 2015, Members agreed to lobby on five infrastructure priorities for 2015.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Midland Main Line Market Harborough Enhancement	Growth deal funding is in place to cover most of the cost of the scheme, but there is still likely to be a shortfall. Network Rail is undertaking work to better define costs and outputs and the scale of further contributions.

A5 (M42-M69) Strategic Enhancement	Funding for the Longshoot to Dodwells section was included in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy. There has been positive feedback on the prospects of funding for scheme development across the full route – but as yet no formal announcements.
Newark Strategic Road and Rail Enhancement	Network Rail has made available resources to explore proposals for a 'Newark flyover'. Development money for the A46 Newark Northern bypass was announced in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy.
North Leicestershire Strategic Rail Enhancement (including Burton-Leicester re-opening)	A study to develop proposals for further rail investment has been let by the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP.
A14 Enhancement	Proposals for a new Junction 10a at Kettering were announced in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy

5.2 The last four of these priorities are being taken forward through the Midlands Connect process, particularly the prioritisation of investment opportunities; and the forthcoming Budget offers an opportunity to make further progress.

5.3 In relation to the Market Harborough rail scheme, this has been caught up in the 'pausing' and subsequent 'un-pausing' of the Midland Main Line electrification scheme. Whilst a funding gap for Market Harborough may remain, the Government appears committed to find a way to deliver the scheme as part of the revised programme of works to be fully implemented by 2023.

## 6. Migration – Asylum Dispersal and Syrian Resettlement

6.1 As reported to the Executive Board in September 2015, at the end of July 2015 there were 2500 supported asylum seekers in the East Midlands. The number has increased again to just over 2650 and the numbers are continuing to rise. The East Midlands has put the case for a fairer distribution of asylum seekers across the UK for some time. This was a key issue in the 2014 report on the Impact of International Migration in the East Midlands.

<http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/ImpactOfMigration-6-A4-AW.pdf>

- 6.2 The Government has commenced the expansion of the existing Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme and intends to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament.
- 6.3 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils are participants in this scheme. A number of other councils, e.g. Leicester City Council, have also expressed a willingness to participate.
- 6.4 EMC hosts the Regional Migration Partnership with responsibility for regional co-ordination on migration matters, including both asylum dispersal and the Syrian resettlement scheme.

## **7. Working with the Region's MPs – the All-Party Parliamentary Group**

- 7.1 MPs in the region met on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to re-establish the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the East Midlands. Chris Heaton-Harris (Conservative, Daventry) and Chris Leslie (Labour, Nottingham East) were unanimously elected as co-chairs.
- 7.2 It was agreed that East Midlands Councils will be the secretariat for the EM APPG, in recognition of the agreed benefits of MPs, council and business leaders working collectively on issues of common concern and importance; EMC and the East Midlands Chambers of Commerce will be developing a collective 'call for action' based on the key priorities for the region for the next meeting of the APPG scheduled for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

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