

## **Policy Committee Report (March 2017)**

### **East Midlands Councils**

#### **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 includes detail on:
  - a) Economic Growth and Infrastructure
  - b) Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Programmes
  - c) Congenital Heart Disease Services at the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre (Glenfield).
  - d) EMC Work Programme 2017/18
- 1.6 Nottinghamshire County Council is a key partner in this work, and EMC welcomes the advice on these and any other matters of policy development and delivery.

## **2. Economic Growth and Infrastructure**

### **a) Midlands Engine**

- 2.1 The Midlands Engine, chaired by Sir John Peace, was established late 2015. In rebalancing the UK economy and delivering the Industrial Strategy, the Midlands Engine has an important role to play.
- 2.2 Its Supervisory Board includes 4 local authority leaders from the East Midlands; Cllrs Jon Collins, Martin Hill, Nick Rushton, Anne Western.
- 2.3 Within the Midlands Engine arrangements, Midlands Connect is a partnership of Local Transport Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships that have come together to develop a Strategic Transport Strategy for the Midlands by March 2017, with financial support from the Department for Transport.

### **b) UK's Industrial Strategy**

- 2.4 The Government has published a (consultation) Green Paper on the proposed UK's Industrial Strategy. It sets out ways in which the government can support businesses by addressing regulatory barriers, agreeing trade deals and helping to establish institutions that encourage innovation and skills development. To achieve this, the Green Paper sets out 10 strategic pillars, attached as Appendix (a), to underpin a new government approach as well as a number proposals including:
- Offer to businesses to strike new 'Sector Deals'.
  - Investment in research and development to support the industries of the future.
  - Plans to boost STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills, digital skills and numeracy, including extending specialist maths schools.
  - Develop a new network of Institutes of Technology, supported by a £170m to improve higher-level technical education nationwide.
- 2.5 Government is seeking views on the Green Paper by 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017 before issuing a White Paper later in the year. Through the recent Midlands Engine Science and Innovation Audit<sup>1</sup>, the Midlands Engine has already identified its potential to capitalise on its existing strengths and business base, including the world-class science and innovation assets across the region.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ingenuitygateway.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Midlands-Engine-SIA-Volume-1-Report-01-Nov.pdf>

### **c) Midlands Engine Strategy**

- 2.6 On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, Philip Hammond delivered his first Autumn Statement and, in regards to the Midlands Engine, announced the (soon) publication of a Midlands Engine Strategy.
- 2.7 It is expected that the strategy will be a high level narrative that reaffirms Government's commitment to the Midlands Engine. The strategy will make clear the importance of ongoing engagement between Government and the Partnership to deliver growth and increased productivity in the Midlands.
- 2.8 Following its publication (February/March 2017, date tbc) there will be an opportunity for the Midlands Engine partnership to respond to the Government with its own vision and action plan.
- 2.9 The publication of both the UK's Industrial Strategy and the subsequent launch of Government's Midlands Engine Strategy represents a significant step forward for the Midlands in confirming the clear expectations and the role of the Midlands Engine in driving productivity and economic growth.

### **d) An Action Plan for the Midlands Engine**

- 2.10 The development of a Midlands Engine Action Plan (its response to the Midlands Engine Strategy) will require the Partnership to agree a shared set of priorities aimed at increasing productivity and delivering economic growth.
- 2.11 During the coming weeks, Midlands Engine partners (including LEPs, local authorities, businesses and universities), through a 'Midlands Engine Task Force', will develop the Action Plan and pull together a response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper and Midlands Engine Strategy.

### **e) Governance**

- 2.12 Since the establishment of the Midlands Engine in late 2015, its supporting governance arrangements have changed to reflect how the partnership's focus and priorities have evolved.
- 2.13 In light of the Industrial Strategy Green Paper and the significant opportunities for the Midlands Engine that should be confirmed through the Midlands Engine Strategy and

Action Plan, it was agreed at the Supervisory Board (9<sup>th</sup> February 2017) that it is an opportune time to review governance arrangements.

- 2.14 It was further agreed that the Governance Review will be led by 'Nomination Committee' (that will also oversee the appointment of a more permanent Midlands Engine Director), comprised of members representing each stakeholder group. The review will take account of views expressed by Government on this matter, and the impact that the devolution of powers (i.e. WMCA and mayoral election) may have more widely on the Midlands Engine.

**f) Midlands Connect**

- 2.15 Midlands Connect is a partnership of Local Transport Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships that have come together to develop a Strategic Transport Strategy for the Midlands by March 2017, with financial support from the Department for Transport.
- 2.16 In addition to the £5 million for Midlands Connect up to March 2017, the Government has recently announced a further £12 million up to March 2020. This gives the partnership greater certainty over the medium term and the ability to progress early priorities identified in the March 2017 Strategy.
- 2.17 The 2016 Autumn Statement also included an allocation of £5 million towards preparation costs for the Midlands Rail Hub, project previously identified by Midlands Connect. If fully implemented, the Midlands Rail Hub will create an extra ten train paths through central Birmingham, which would facilitate a significant improvement in east-west rail connectivity across the Midlands.
- 2.18 Over the last few weeks the focus of work through the Midlands Connect Technical Advisory Group and Steering Group has been to develop a sequence of interventions that can most effectively deliver the objectives of the Strategy. Developed through wide regional collaboration across the Midlands, EMC and the relevant local transport authorities have worked to ensure that it reflects key priorities for the East Midlands.
- 2.19 The Midlands Connect Strategic Board considered and endorsed a final version of the Midlands Connect Strategy on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

### **g) Summary of Midlands Engine Immediate Priorities**

- 2.20 The important next steps during early 2017 include the following:
- A response to the UK's Industrial Strategy Green Paper.
  - Government's publication of the Midlands Engine Strategy.
  - A response to the Midlands Engine Strategy – the Midlands Engine vision and action plan.
  - Completion of governance review.
  - Delivery of agreed Midlands Connect strategy and regional transport priorities.

### **h) HS2 in the East Midlands**

- 2.21 The East Midlands HS2 Emerging Growth Strategy was submitted to Government in September 2016, available on the EMC website [here](#). The document sets our initial plans to use HS2 connectivity to boost economic growth from just below to above the projected UK trend - equivalent to an additional 74,000 local jobs and an extra £4 billion to the UK economy.
- 2.22 The November 2016 Command Paper confirmed Government's intention to build an HS2 Hub Station serving the East Midlands at Toton and an Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley. It also proposed that instead of a new HS2 station at Meadowhall, South Yorkshire should be served by two 'classic compatible' HS2 trains per hour stopping at the existing Sheffield Midland Station, at least one of which would also stop at Chesterfield.
- 2.23 The Command Paper went on to confirm the release of an additional £625,000 to complete the East Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy by July 2017. The East Midlands HS2 Strategic Board met on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and agreed a work programme, commissioning budget and technical briefs for a number of key studies, some of which will also be used to inform the Government's Phase 2b Hybrid bill. Several elements will be joint funded with Midland Connect.
- 2.24 The objective of the final HS2 Growth Strategy will be to define a development and infrastructure proposition for Toton, Chesterfield and Staveley that can realise the identified economic growth potential, and which is clear, costed and deliverable. The East Midland HS2 Strategic Board will continue to meet on a regular basis to progress this work.

### **i) East Midlands Rail Franchise Competition**

- 2.25 EMC is working as a partner with the Department for Transport on the East Midlands Rail Franchise Competition, with the objective of ensuring that future rail services better meet the needs of businesses and communities across the East Midlands and help deliver the Midlands Engine agenda.
- 2.26 With financial contributions from the relevant Local Transport Authorities, EMC has secured additional technical support that is embedded with the DfT franchise team in London on a part-time basis. In addition, a county council has seconded an officer to help co-ordinate technical input from the local transport authorities.
- 2.27 The Government published the [East Midlands Franchise Competition Prospectus](#) on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2016. The document contains a summary of EMC's position (page 20) as agreed by EMC's Executive Board.
- 2.28 To provide a clear mandate for engagement for EMC with the Department for Transport and bidders over the coming months, the EMC Executive agreed the following documents: available on the EMC [website](#):
- Strategic Statement which sets out regional objectives for new franchise.
  - Social Value Statement which sets out social, economic and environmental objectives for the delivery of the.
- 2.29 The latest timetable for the franchise competition is as follows:
- Spring 2016                      Public Consultation (dates to be confirmed by DfT)
  - May 2017                         Invitation to Tender
  - March 2018                      Contract Award
  - November 2018                New Franchise Starts
- 2.30 In order to inform responses to the consultation process, EMC has organised a second stakeholder workshop for the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at City Hall, Leicester. To reserve a place at this event, please contact: [lois.dale@emcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:lois.dale@emcouncils.gov.uk)

### **j) Establishment of an East Midlands Strategic Transport Board**

- 2.31 Over the last couple of years there has been a significant increase strategic transport activity at the regional level. In particular:
- Midlands Connect
  - HS2

- Midland Main Line Upgrade & Electrification
  - East Midlands Rail Franchise
- 2.32 Given the scale of current and future regional transport activity, local transport authorities have agreed in principle to establish a separate East Midlands Strategic Transport Board to provide additional political governance and oversight.
- 2.33 Supported by the county and unitary authorities' Transport Directors (ADEPT) Group, the Strategic Transport Board would comprise members nominated by the relevant transport authorities but with an expectation it would be the relevant 'portfolio holder'. Senior representatives of the Department for Transport, Highways England and Network Rail would be invited to attend as ex-officio members.
- 2.34 If positioned publicly as 'Transport for the East Midlands', it may act as a counterbalance to the West Midlands Combined Authority and Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM).

### **3. Asylum and Refugee Resettlement**

- 3.1 As a region, the East Midlands Councils (through the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership) has been tasked with the delivery of key elements of Government programmes including working with local authorities to become asylum dispersal areas, coordination of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and facilitation of the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Children. EMC has also been tasked with conducting a review of ESOL provision in the region.
- 3.2 The following update provides a summary of the key elements of national migration policy where EMC has a co-ordinating and leadership role on behalf of councils in the region.
- Asylum Dispersal: The need for councils to engage in discussions about the potential to become a new dispersal area.
  - Syrian resettlement: Delivery of the regional coordination model and establishing the regional capacity for 2017/18.
  - The Vulnerable Childrens' Resettlement Scheme: To ascertain the capacity of councils in the region in being able to participate in this scheme and to coordinate arrivals.
  - UASC: Delivery of the National Transfer Scheme of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, support for the resettlement of unaccompanied children from

Europe (the 'Dubs children') and those who are reunited with family members in the UK via 'Dublin iii' arrangements.

- 3.3 EMC remains concerned regarding the impact of multiple requests to local authorities of the various asylum and refugee resettlement schemes and is working to ensure that this is better understood by Government.

**a) Dispersal of Asylum Seekers**

- 3.4 In July 2015 there were 2500 supported asylum seekers in the East Midlands, at the end of September 2016, this number had increased to just over 2900.

- 3.5 Asylum seekers are located in 5 dispersal areas across the East Midlands; with approximately 800 in Derby City, 1100 in Leicester City, 1050 in Nottingham City, 55 in Oadby and Wigston and 17 in Broxtowe. Gedling Borough Council is also an asylum dispersal area but there has yet to be any procurement of suitable accommodation.

- 3.6 These figures represent a further steady increase in asylum seeker numbers rather than the spikes that were seen in 2015. However the opening of new dispersal areas in Oadby and Wigston and Broxtowe accounts for part of the increase in the regional total and Leicester and Nottingham have also seen an increase in their numbers.

- 3.7 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 on asylum seekers supported under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 can be found [here](#).

- 3.8 In order to reduce pressure on existing dispersal areas (particularly Derby, Leicester and Nottingham), EMC is working with the Home Office and G4S (the accommodation providers) to explore the potential to widen dispersal beyond the existing areas.

- 3.9 The current COMPASS accommodation contract comes to an end in 2019 and the Home Office are consulting with local government, via EMC's Regional Migration Board, on the future of asylum dispersal beyond the existing arrangements.

**b) Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme**

- 3.10 The expanded Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) has now been in operation for nearly 18 months. The purpose of the scheme is to resettle 20,000



Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament. Significant progress has been made both nationally and regionally. At the end of September 2016, 184 refugees had been resettled across the East Midlands and this figure continues to grow. New arrivals were received at the end of 2016 and a further group of arrivals is being planned for March. Local authority participation has also continued to grow with the participation of Charnwood and Rushcliffe Borough Councils. Home Office data on participation can be found here. The next release of data which will reflect further expansion of the scheme across the region will be available from 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.

- 3.11 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) had been identified regionally as a potential barrier to success. Government has made available an additional £10 million nationally to provide extra funding for ESOL and future funding is available for childcare whilst attending ESOL classes. EMC (with further education colleges) is leading a review of ESOL provision in the East Midlands.

**c) Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme**

- 3.12 The Home Office is continuing to seek offers of pledges for the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), aiming to resettle 300 people nationally before the end of March (3,000 by the end of 2020 Parliament). The scheme applies to children and their families outside of Europe in refugee camps in the Middle East and North Africa over the lifetime of this Parliament, with the same funding levels as the current Syrian scheme.
- 3.13 Of the 3,000 places, it is expected that only a small number of this cohort will be unaccompanied children and these would be dealt with under the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- 3.14 The EMSMP has received from the Home Office a small number of cases to be considered by local authorities within the region. One local authority has recently offered to support a family under the scheme and one unaccompanied child has arrived in the East Midlands as part of the scheme.
- 3.15 This does represent an additional local commitment and local authorities will need to consider participation alongside other schemes.

#### **d) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

- 3.16 The UASC National Transfer Scheme has been built on regions taking a proportion of UASC in relation to their current looked after child population, with no region expected to exceed 0.07% UASC and refugee children as a proportion of the total child population in their area by the end of March 2017.
- 3.17 The East Midlands (through DCSs and EMC) has taken part in the initial phase of the national transfer scheme, subject to individual Local Authority agreement, and to date just over 40 UASC have been transferred to the region directly from France, from Kent, or in-region from Northamptonshire. The number of UASC transferred to local authorities within this scheme remain a small proportion of the total UASC population that local authorities are statutorily responsible for.
- 3.18 As part of the commitment to the National Transfer Scheme, the East Midlands has received a small number of children under the Lord Dubs amendment (Section 67 of the Immigration Act) from France. While it has been announced that the scheme will be closed after the current cohort of 150 is resettled, a small number of additional arrivals of Dubs cases are expected in the coming weeks and local authorities within the region have been asked to identify capacity to support these arrivals.
- 3.19 Placements, capacity and funding remain primary concerns. EMC has led work in fully understanding the full costs incurred by local authorities in providing support for UASC, with our initial review confirming that a little over half of the costs are met by Government funding. However, further work is needed to fully understand the figures, particularly the variance in costs reported by different councils.
- 3.20 There have been a number of children within the region (around 40) that have been re-united with family members under the Dublin iii regulation. This has proved challenging for Children's Service departments as in a significant number of cases the arrival of an additional family member has presented issues of homelessness and destitution for the established relative. These concerns have been relayed to the Home Office.

#### **4. Health Services**

- 4.1 Councillors are reminded that EMC is supporting efforts to retain Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Services at the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre (EMCHC), formerly known as Glenfield Hospital. In July 2016, NHS England stated that it was

mind to decommission CHD surgery from EMCHC, without any commitment to full public consultation. In October 2016, NHS England conceded that public consultation would be required.

- 4.2 After delaying the start of the consultation period from mid-December 2016, consultation formally commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and will run through the local government purdah period until Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Information relating to this consultation can be found [here](#).

## **5. EMC Work Programme 2017/18**

- 5.1 A work programme/business plan will be considered by EMC's Executive Board in late-March 2017.
- 5.2 In addition to the strategic influencing work and leadership on infrastructure and economic growth programmes, it is also important to highlight EMC's continued role as the Regional Employers' body, our member and officer development programme, HR support and organisational low-cost consultancy service.
- 5.3 EMC values the engagement of both members and officers at Nottinghamshire County Council and invites views on the key issues that should be included in EMC's work programme for 2017/18.

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