

COUNCIL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R SUTTON TO COUNCILLOR R BLUNT

“The last meeting of Council recommended, under Agenda 11, ‘Appointments to Community Bodies’, appointments to East Midlands Councils and the Regional Migration Board:

In what sense are these ‘community bodies’ independent of this Council and, if, on the other hand, membership of and influence via these two bodies indicates a democratic function, how are policy setting, accountability to Council members and our electorate, and open and transparent decision making all ensured, making specific reference to:

- a) Transport investment and delivery for rail and roads impinging on the District,
- b) The temporary housing and permanent resettlement of asylum seekers in the District?”

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR R BLUNT TO COUNCILLOR R SUTTON

“I have liaised with and taken advice from East Midlands Councils in preparing the response to this question.

- East Midlands Councils is independent partnership body that works on behalf local authorities in the region. EMC provides a platform for collective work and decision making, and is accountable to its Local Authority membership.
- Each member council has one seat by virtue of its membership, additional seats are allocated on the basis of political balance. All EMC boards are politically-led, with decisions made by Local Authority councillors (including leaders and portfolio holders) from within its membership.
- All councillors in the region are invited to the plenary meetings of EMC (two per year) and the agenda, papers and minutes of all Board meetings are publicly accessible.
- Policy setting, in respect to where EMC has these responsibilities, is through the politically-led Boards, including the collective regional response to nationally set policy, e.g., the implementation of asylum dispersal programmes, or in the case of strategic transport investment. Boards agree a collective response to inform the prioritisation of nationally-directed investment, e.g. the Integrated Rail Plan.
- EMC does not have responsibility for deciding the numbers, or location, of asylum dispersal (including contingency hotels). This is a nationally determined programme, undertaken in consultation with EMC and local authorities. Similarly, while EMC seeks to influence the prioritisation of strategic road and rail investment, decisions remain either nationally determined, or through the respective Local Transport Authority as appropriate.”