

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

TUESDAY, 8 JULY 2025

Present:-

Cllr. Roy Denney (Chairman)
Cllr. Janet Forey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam	Cllr. Susan Findlay	Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP	Cllr. Helen Gambardella	Cllr. Tracey Shepherd
Cllr. Nick Brown	Cllr. Nigel Grundy	Cllr. Dillan Shikotra
Cllr. Nick Chapman	Cllr. Paul Hartshorn	Cllr. Mike Shirley
Cllr. Adrian Clifford	Cllr. Richard Holdridge	Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore	Cllr. Mark Jackson	Cllr. Ben Taylor
Cllr. Luke Cousin	Cllr. Becca Lunn	Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Cllr. Tony Deakin	Cllr. Les Phillimore	Cllr. Maggie Wright
Cllr. Alex DeWinter	Cllr. Terry Richardson	Cllr. Neil Wright

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Marc Greenwood	- Executive Director - Place
Katie Hollis	- Finance Group Manager
Gemma Dennis	- Corporate Services Group Manager
Ian Jones	- Housing Services Manager
John Crane	- Housing Strategy Team Leader
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Avisa Birchenough	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Royston Bayliss, Cllr. Dr John Bloxham, Cllr. Stuart Coar, Cllr. Hannah Gill,
Cllr. Antony Moseley, Cllr. Matt Tomeo and Cllr. Bob Waterton

51. MINUTES SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF TREVOR MATTHEWS

The Chair, Cllr. Roy Denney invited Members and Officers to hold a minute silence for Trevor Matthews.

Trevor Matthews, a former Conservative District Councillor, who served the Narborough and Littlethorpe Ward from 2015 – 2023 sadly passed away on 29 June 2025.

52. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

53. MINUTES

The Chairman announced that the minutes from the meetings held on 20 May 2025 will be considered at the next Council meeting.

54. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Cllr. Roy Denney made announcements in respect of the following events he attended:

- Fundraising concert at De Montfort Hall in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund.
- Meet and Greet event alongside the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council and Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire
- Blaby Tourism Summit at Stanton Lakes
- Armed Forces Coffee Morning with local Veterans at the Blaby District Council Offices
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Nature Recovery Strategy meeting
- Retirement presentation of Ian Davies, Development Services Team Leader

The Chairman invited Members to the following upcoming events:

- VJ Day Event being held at Blaby District Council Offices on 15 August 2025
- Chairman at Home Event, featuring a Jazz Band to raise funds for LOROS on 19 September 2025
- Civic Carol Service being held at St Peters Church in Glenfield on 11 December 2025

55. LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader, Cllr. Ben Taylor presented his statement in respect of the following:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Tourism takes centre stage for student placements
- Job and Skills Fair
- Send off for Daz
- Members Advisory Group
- Air Quality Improves
- Flag raising ceremony
- In-house ICT transition
- A Place to Grow open day

56. PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL

No requests were received.

57. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

58. QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Question to Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore (Finance, People & Transformation Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader) from Cllr. Paul Hartshorn.

“Can the relevant Portfolio Holder confirm whether Blaby District Council is actively exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve service delivery, efficiency or internal operations, and if so, what areas are currently being considered or trialled?”

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore responded:

“The Council is exploring the use of AI to improve our internal operations and service delivery. AI presents a significant opportunity to improve efficiency and modernise operations. When used responsibly, AI can help us reduce costs, and deliver more responsive, accessible and consistent services. Before introducing AI, it is vital that we use it responsibly and that appropriate governance is in place. Currently our Officers are drafting an AI Policy and Procedure.”

59. QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Question to Cllr. Mike Shirley – Planning, Transformation and ICT Portfolio Holder, from Cllr. Maggie Wright.

“I was pleased to read an article in the July 2025 addition of the Local Government Association magazine, “first” that the Government will impose powers on developers to reclaim sites if they are not built and delivered within specific timeframes. The article goes on to say that Housebuilders will have to commit to delivery timeframes before they get planning permission and must submit annual reports to councils showing their progress, this is under new rules to ensure homes with planning permission are built out.

As a Ward Councillor I am concerned that because Blaby District Council no longer has a five-year land supply and the “Tilted Balance” is being applied when determining planning applications. Developers are taking advantage of this situation leading to excessive growth numbers sitting in the planning system and continually being added to. The cumulative impact of adding the housing numbers from the new Local Plan could potentially mean our villages and district will be saturated by development because of these legacy numbers. Houses are not being built but applications are still being approved.

My question(s) to the portfolio holder is how many houses have been approved within the last 3 years and are sitting in the system but not built?”

Cllr. Mike Shirley responded:

“I thank Cllr Wright for her question, and I can advise that the number of dwellings that Blaby District Council have permitted on sites over ten dwellings (large sites) between April 2021-March 2024 is 828. During this same period 1061 houses were completed. This includes planning permissions granted before 2021. April 2024 to March 2025 figures will be available in the coming weeks. For context these are the dwellings which have received either a Full planning permission or a Reserved Matters approval and therefore can legally commence on site.”

Cllr. Maggie Wright asked the following question:

“The average build time for a typical house in Blaby is between 8-12 months and this follows the England average. As Cllr Wright will appreciate there is a period of time from receiving planning permission to a developer starting on site. Will these be added to the number expected to be delivered by the Local Plan or will they be accounted for?”

Cllr. Mike Shirley responded:

“These dwellings will count towards the relevant time period in the emerging Local Plan and are therefore already be accounted for.”

Cllr. Maggie Wright asked the following question:

“What is your strategy to deal with this situation?”

Cllr. Mike Shirley responded:

“There are several factors that contribute to the length of time sites take to be delivered. These include whether sites are developed by a land agent, or an actual house builder, as well considerations regarding preparatory work a developer needs to undertake ahead of commencement on site.

At present the Council, like all Local Planning Authorities, has limited power to ensure that developers commence or complete a development site. The exception being where we instruct a shortening of the development commencement period. This is an action we have taken on several sites such as Foston Road, Countesthorpe, and will continue to do so where we believe it necessary.

However as Cllr Wright has observed in her question, the Government has proposals included in the forthcoming Planning and Infrastructure Bill which will provide Local Planning Authorities with additional powers to influence developers to build, once permission is granted.”

60. MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2026

Considered - Report of the Customer Insight, Experience and Engagement Service Manager, presented by Cllr. Ben Taylor – Leader of the Council.

DECISION

That the Modern Slavery Statement set out at Appendix A of the report be adopted by Blaby District Council.

Reasons:

1. It is a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 that organisations with a turnover of £36m or more publish a statement on their approach to ensuring that there is no modern slavery in their own business and their supply chains. Although Blaby District Council is under no legal obligation to publish a statement, the Local Government Association is encouraging all local authorities to produce an annual statement ensuring transparency in their approach to modern slavery and human trafficking.

2. The Modern Slavery Act also includes a number of provisions for local authorities. Section 52 of the Act places a duty to identify and report potential victims through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Depending on the age and needs of victims of modern slavery, councils may also have statutory responsibilities to provide support to them.
3. Relevant policies should reflect the councils agreed approach to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking to ensure that this statement is successfully delivered.

61. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2024/25

Considered - Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore – Finance, People and Performance Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader.

DECISIONS

1. That the treasury management activities for 2024/2025 be approved.
2. That the prudential and treasury indicators for 2024/25 be approved.

Reasons:

1. The regulatory framework governing treasury management activities includes a requirement that the Council should produce an annual review of treasury activities undertaken in the preceding financial year. It must also report the performance against the approved prudential indicators for the year.
2. This report fulfils the requirement above and incorporates the needs of the Prudential Code to ensure adequate monitoring of capital expenditure plans and the Council's prudential indicators. The treasury strategy and prudential indicators for 2024/25 were contained in the report approved by Council on 27th February 2024.

62. AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS

Considered - Report of the Housing Services Manager, presented by Cllr. Les Phillimore – Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder.

DECISION

That an allocation of £148,381 towards a proposed 21 unit all affordable housing scheme be approved.

Reasons:

1. To ensure that funds previously allocated for affordable housing and commuted sums paid in lieu of affordable housing are utilised in the most appropriate and efficient way.
2. To ensure that the above funds are used to enable the delivery of affordable housing.

63. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman withdrew this item to allow the restricted minutes to be considered at the next meeting.

64. APPROVAL OF RESTRICTED MINUTES - 20 MAY 2025

The Chairman announced that the restricted minutes from the meetings held on 20 May 2025 will be considered at the next Council meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.25 P.M.