

Leader's Statement

8 July 2025

A busy beginning

It's been a busy first few weeks for me as the new Leader of Blaby District Council and I'd like to thank everyone who has helped me during this hectic but very exciting time.

I've been delighted to enjoy early and really productive meetings with Peter Bedford, MP for Mid Leicestershire, who visited our offices, and also Rupert Matthews, Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, along with Inspector Matt Allingham of Leicestershire Police. I was also able to chat with MP Alberto Costa at the recent Sharnford Fete.



I'm looking forward to working closely with these leading figures on issues which matter to our residents and to help continue to make Blaby District a great place to live, work and visit.

Local government reorganisation

Our work continues apace on bringing forward the biggest changes to local government in more than 50 years. Initial public consultation has now launched on our North-City-South, three unitary proposal, as agreed with Rutland County Council and the other six local Councils in Leicestershire.

We want to hear what people think about the proposals and I would urge all my fellow Councillors to share details of the consultation and encourage their communities to make their views known.

Tourism takes centre stage for student placements

It was wonderful to take part in a special week-long group work placement project for 20 Year 10 students from Brockington Academy recently.

Our Community Work and Skills team, supported by our Health and Leisure team, organised the event which offered the teenagers an insight into tourism and Council responsibilities, with an emphasis on careers.

The students learnt about our District's current tourism offer and were tasked with designing a new attraction, meeting different teams to see how the Council responds to such schemes at all stages of its development.

I was among the Councillors, officers and tourism partners who were at the students' presentations on the final day, showcasing their tourist attraction schemes. I think I can speak for everyone there when I say we were hugely impressed with the imagination and enthusiasm of the young people involved.

A massive thank you to our teams for arranging such an engaging and worthwhile project and an enormous well done to all concerned.

Job and Skills Fair

Our Community, Work and Skills team were also behind our latest job fair event which was held at the Council offices last week. The team put in a lot of effort to get these events off the ground and they have become a successful staple in the Council calendar.

This time it was pleasing to see new local businesses in attendance utilising the event to recruit local people into local jobs. In total there were a total of 23 stall holders, the majority of these being businesses with job vacancies, but also training providers and organisations offering their support to residents of Blaby District. The Job and Skills Fair was well attended showcasing the need for this type of event.

Amazing send-off for Daz

It was with sadness that our depot colleagues shared the news of the passing of one of their longest serving employees, Darren Hill, or Daz as he was known. Daz served 20 years at the Council as a waste collection operative. He was 57 years old when he passed away peacefully with his family by his side on 17 May. A poignant funeral service was held at Countesthorpe Crematorium and was attended by a great number of his colleagues as well as Councillor Nigel Grundy.



Daz was a huge Liverpool FC supporter and some people wore Liverpool shirts in his honour. Others wore their hi-vis, and so for the most part it was a sea of orange and red.

Following the service his brother Vinny sent in a thank you card to the Council, thanking everyone for their support.

Daz will be sorely missed. Blaby was a massive part of his life and his co-workers were like family. May he rest in peace.

Members Advisory Group

I was pleased to attend my first MAG meeting recently where I heard from officers about the Government's intent to develop an approach to regional planning. MAG is a meeting of key Members of all local authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire area.

The Members are responsible for advising on the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire, together with advising on any other key strategic planning matters. Although it was my first meeting I was pleased to be appointed the Vice Chair of the group. I look forward to working with partners over the coming months as we collaborate on our joint strategic planning ambitions.

Air quality improves

I'm delighted to say air quality continues to improve in the District. Last month Cabinet approved the Annual Status Report 2025 which detailed an assessment of air quality in our area. At the beginning of 2024, there were five Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the district, in November 2024 we were able to revoke four of these areas, and members will recall at the same time a new AQMA was declared in Braunstone Town.

The Annual Status Report is prepared using a template, published by Defra, and has to be submitted by 30 June each year. I am pleased to share that all data has been ratified and subject to the relevant corrections in accordance with Defra guidance. The results indicate there are no exceedances of the Air Quality Objectives for any of the monitoring locations in 2024 and results indicated an overall decrease across the district compared to 2022 and 2023.

We are committed to continually monitoring air quality throughout the District, with particular emphasis on the current and recently revoked AQMAs. In addition to the statutory duties set out by Defra, we will continue to work on projects funded by air quality grants, such as Let's Go Electric and Particulates Matter.

Let's Go Electric has enabled us to purchase the first electric vehicles in its commitment to Net Zero and cleaner air. The Particulates Matter Project will see a public portal launched soon allowing residents to view air quality in real time. We will continue to seek out new opportunities to help improve air quality across the district.

We have also produced a draft Air Quality Action Plan to address the issues in the AQMAs. This document outlines the actions the Council and stakeholders will take to improve the air quality within the AQMAs and the District, this document is to be subject to consultation before approval and publication in late 2025-early 2026.

Flag raising ceremony

On Friday 27 June 2025 we held a flag raising ceremony to mark Armed Forces Day which takes place on the last Saturday in June. It forms part of a week of nationwide celebration to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community from currently serving personnel to service families, veterans and cadets. We also acknowledge Reserves Day which was Wednesday 25 June and provides the country with an opportunity to recognise the valuable service and contribution they make. Reservists give up their spare time to serve in the Reserve Forces, balancing their civilian life with a military career.

The ceremony was attended by guests from our Armed Forces wellbeing coffee mornings, many of whom have been actively involved in creating an installation in the Remembrance Garden. We also welcomed students from Brockington Academy who joined us at the ceremony. They had been taking part in a work experience placement project, showing them different career pathways as part of our world of work opportunities.

In-house ICT transition

At the time of publication of this Leader's Statement our ICT in-house project is nearing completion and full credit to the team, they have done an amazing job. It's very exciting to see the benefits of having full control over our IT system, along with the introduction of new technologies such as AI. With all the work around LGR, our new IT system can be a leading example of how Councils can operate with modern technologies.



A Place to Grow open day

Our community garden, A Place to Grow, attracted scores of people during its annual open day. People of all ages came along to learn about the garden and enjoy the fun activities. I was delighted to pop along and it was a pleasure to chat to visitors who were all having a great time.



Tourism Summit

This year's annual summit took place at Stanton Lakes on Wednesday 18 June. It was well attended by 30 key partners with presentations by Visit Leicester, Leicester comedy festival and business support. The summit summarised the progress of the last 12 months and the implementation of our new Tourism Growth Plan. It was an opportunity to share progress against the growth plan including the summer campaign with Visit Leicester and the Ice House tours commencing for 2025.

Blaby District – Carbon Neutral by 2050

Net Zero Week

As part of our ambitions to be a Net Zero organisation by 2030 and a Net Zero District by 2050 we organised specialised training for our staff to help them make greener choices.

Three new modules on Carbon Literacy were launched on our internal training portal, Carbon Literacy and Net Zero, Environmental Awareness at Work and Environmental Sustainability in Business.

These provided staff with a good understanding of the causes and consequences of carbon emissions, alongside some practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint and that of their service area. The aim is to get staff to look at the ways they work through a green lens and think about how they might be able to do things in a more sustainable way. From simple things like switching off lights and computers, turning down the heating, car sharing or cycling to work or looking at procedures for how goods and services are procured.