

Leader's Statement

14 April 2026



Enabling our communities and supporting our vulnerable residents

Progress on the Purchase of Additional Temporary Accommodation

Both of our acquisition schemes in Countesthorpe and Glen Parva continue to progress well. Solicitors have been appointed and deposits have already been paid on six units at Glen Parva. These homes will be ready for occupation by the end of 2026. The scheme uses the Government's Local Authority Housing Funding Round 4 funding.

We are seeing similar momentum at Countesthorpe where we will purchase 35 homes. The first six properties will be ready before the end of 2026. A further 13 homes will follow during 2027, with the remainder delivered over the next two years, giving us a steady and reliable pipeline of new, high-quality affordable homes for homeless households.

Glen Parva Community Fridge handover

Last April our Community, Business, Work and Skills team opened a Community Fridge in Glen Parva. Community Fridges are about preventing surplus food from being wasted with produce donated from local supermarkets and growers. The fridge has been an enormous success, saving almost two tonnes of food from landfill.

Just a few days ago the fridge was officially handed over to Glen Parva Parish Council. It joins a wide range of services offered by the parish to benefit local residents and I'm sure it will continue to be an incredibly useful resource for the community. I'd like to congratulate everyone involved from Blaby District Council for doing such an amazing job in setting up the fridge and getting it to the point where the parish can pick up the baton and run with it.





Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment

Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

I was pleased to present the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty report to Cabinet recently. This new statutory requirement on Blaby District Council was introduced under the Environment Act (2021). The duty requires all public authorities in England to consider how to actively conserve and enhance biodiversity and to report and publish what actions have been taken. We also need to detail what work is planned to enhance biodiversity.

The information captured in our report has been gathered from our own work and from national data sources. It has proved to be a helpful review and stocktake of actions we're taking to support the enhancement of biodiversity across our District. A series of helpful improvement actions have also been identified as part of this work. These actions will be taken forward through the officer-led Council Climate Action board. The board will then report through to the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group, chaired by Councillor Breckon.



Growing and supporting our economy

Blaby Business Grant Scheme

I'm delighted to say our new Blaby Business Grant Scheme will launch this month, offering local micro enterprises, employing less than 10 people, the chance to access funding to help them grow.

Around 90% of businesses in the District are micro enterprises and feedback from them about how difficult it is to obtain external funding has inspired our new scheme. We'll be offering two types of grant - a Shop Front Improvement Grant and a Decarbonisation and Business Growth Grant - to help ventures enhance their premises, cut emissions or elevate products, services or ways of working.

This is initially a one-year pilot with a total grant pot of £25,000 but if successful we will look to extend the support. More details will be available on our website soon.

Tourism cycle routes

Part of our Tourism Growth Plan is to encourage visitors to enjoy the District in a more sustainable way and so it was wonderful to see our first two tourist cycle routes launched during an event to mark English Tourism Week.



Starting from Everards Meadows, which already connects to the National Cycle Network, the routes offer a new, leisurely way to take in local attractions, including our historic Bouskell Park Ice House, without relying on a car. I know work is already starting on further routes, opening up new opportunities for both tourists and residents alike.



Spring Job and Skills Fair

Our first Job and Skills Fair of 2026 was held at the start of the month, attracting local businesses with vacancies and a host of training, development and support agencies. I'm pleased to say the event was enthusiastically attended with scores of people interested in job opportunities or seeking help to improve their skills. Thanks to everyone involved in organising the event and we look forward to the next fair where we hope more residents can find the help they need to step up their career.





Keeping you safe and healthy

Health and Wellbeing Festival

We were proud to host the latest Blaby District Health and Wellbeing Festival at our offices recently. The annual event is organised by the South Blaby and Lutterworth Primary Care Network with input from local practices and a range of wider stakeholders as part of our local Integrated Neighbourhood Team. This year people were able to take advantage of free health checks including blood pressure, heart health, height and weight measurements and general lifestyle advice.

Dozens of NHS, charity and community organisations were in attendance to show just how much support there is locally for residents and how that support can be easily accessed. Our very own team from Active Blaby were on hand too, showcasing how our programmes can make a difference and help people achieve their health and wellbeing goals. Activities ran on Narborough Park, giving a taste of the JUST Get Involved initiative, providing a fun, friendly and inclusive environment to encourage women to enjoy exercise. A great day all round with an amazing turnout from interested residents.



Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

Youth Conference

It was wonderful to see so many enthusiastic young people at our latest annual Blaby District Youth Conference, organised by our Youth Council. Dozens of students from four local schools were involved in the day which included interactive workshops on issues such as voting at 16, misogyny and discrimination in general.

There was also the usual afternoon 'meet the Councillor' session where I and other members got to chat to the students about subjects which mattered to them. I was impressed with the maturity of the attendees and their desire to make a difference and I hope we were able to offer an insight into local democracy and the importance of public service.

One of the main items discussed was what should be the main focus of the Youth Council's work for the coming year. After debate the top three were voted for – and these were addiction (including drugs, alcohol, vaping and smoking), antisocial behaviour/crime and sexism.



The Youth Council is always keen to welcome new members, if you know anyone between the ages of 11 and 19 who may be interested in joining then point them in the direction of our Voluntary and Community Sector team.

Food waste collections launch

Our new weekly food waste collections started at the end of March, in line with the government's Simpler Recycling Reforms This was the culmination of many months of planning, hard work and co-operation between diverse teams, all pulling together to ensure the service launched smoothly.

On behalf of the whole Council I'd like to express our huge appreciation to all those teams involved in the project for bringing the new service forward. I'd also like to thank the residents of the District for supporting the new collections and helping commit towards a more sustainable future. Each time you 'scrape, bag, bin' you are diverting food waste from landfill, avoiding the creation of harmful methane emissions, and instead contributing to the production of green energy and fertiliser for growing food.



Local government reorganisation

The government's public consultation on the three proposals submitted for reshaping councils across Leicestershire and Rutland has now concluded. The consultation sought people's views on the proposals put forward by ourselves, together with the other district and borough councils and Rutland County Council, as well as those from Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council.

I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors for helping share details of the consultation among their constituents and encouraging them to take part. I understand the response rate in Leicestershire has been one of the highest in the country with some 5,000 responses received. We must now wait for the government to make a decision on which proposal will go forward.

