

Leader's Statement

30 June 2026



Enabling our communities and supporting our vulnerable residents

Supporting Tenants and Landlords with the Renters' Rights Act

The new Renters' Rights Act came into force last month bringing with it major changes for both tenants and landlords. It also brings extra responsibility for us as a council as we now have a duty to act should tenants make a complaint about their landlords. I know our tenancy relations team has been working really hard to support anyone needing to get to grips with the new rules, including workshops for landlords and communications to renters.

Community Grants Scheme First Round

Our long-standing Community Grants reopened for the first round of the 2026-27 scheme in April with a closing date for applications just a couple of weeks ago and the grant panel sitting to decide successful awards on 17 June. The scheme is invaluable to many clubs, societies and organisations across the District, enabling them to refurbish dated facilities, implement 'green' improvements and address challenges with high running costs or the cost of living. Last year 40 eligible applications were received, more than £66,000 was awarded and around 28,000 people were expected to benefit from these grant-funded projects. Our grants really do make a real difference to the lives of our residents.

VCS Forum Meetings

Our regular forums continue with presentations on funding streams, both through our own offerings and external agencies, and information on training and development. These



sessions provide invaluable opportunities for volunteers and community sector representatives to come together, network and learn about the myriad support options out there which can help their organisations thrive.

Armed Forces Support

Our commitment to supporting armed forces personnel, both serving and retired, continues to go from strength to strength. The backbone of our work, the armed forces coffee morning, provides an opportunity for veterans, their partners or carers, to come together to socialise, enjoy activities and talks and gain invaluable advice and information which can make a real, practical difference to their lives. Currently those attending the coffee mornings are crafting poppies which will be used as part of the Remembrance Day commemorations – and kits are available for anyone who also fancies getting creative. As well as this our Community, Business, Work and Skills team deliver an array of celebration and support including the flag-raising on Armed Forces Day and visits to places with military links.



Action on Homelessness

It's fantastic to see the £500,000 funding allocated to support homelessness prevention in our budget is being put to practical use. To date, this has included the creation of two new homelessness prevention posts, focused on delivering earlier intervention and targeted support before households reach crisis point. Our work at Dallington House, in Enderby,



continues to take a prevention approach, with the 13 single, self-contained units providing much needed accommodation and wider support offered to try and break the cycle of homelessness which affects so many people. The pre-tenancy workshops delivered on site have been well attended and are helping residents develop the skills and confidence needed to manage a tenancy successfully, including budgeting, understanding tenancy responsibilities and accessing support at an early stage. Importantly, we have also launched monthly mental health drop-in sessions in partnership with Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust. These sessions afford residents accessible support in a familiar setting, reinforcing our commitment to addressing the wider issues that can contribute to homelessness.

This work sits alongside the Council's wider programme to increase the supply of affordable accommodation across the District including progress on the purchase of new properties in Glen Parva and Countesthorpe. Together, these projects represent a significant step forward in providing good-quality housing options for homeless households and strengthening our ability to prevent and respond to homelessness locally.



Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment

Planning Appeals

At the start of the month we received the decision from the Planning Inspectorate on the Sycamore Street appeal, allowing the current occupants a personal temporary planning permission to stay on the site in Blaby village until June 2029. Our planning committee, as recommended by officers, originally refused planning permission for the siting of caravans and erection of gates, concerned about the impact on the wider conservation area and Bouskell Park itself. Understandably we are disappointed our refusal was not upheld, but of course, must respect the inspector's ruling and the reasons behind it. During May we also had the planning inquiry into our refusal of permission for homes and employment on the Blaby Golf Centre site. The appeal took place at our offices over several days with a number of residents making representations. We now await the decision from the Planning Inspectorate on this case and hope for a favourable verdict.

Clean Air Day

We continue to make strong progress in addressing air quality and climate change across the District, with a focus on both organisational leadership and community engagement. To coincide with Clean Air Day, we hosted a well-attended coffee morning for Council staff, providing an opportunity to showcase our achievements to date and highlight the important role individuals can play in improving air quality. The event celebrated Blaby's ongoing commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, including promoting the use of electric vehicles and active travel, encouraging more sustainable food choices, and maintaining a robust programme of air quality monitoring and inspection work. I and other



councillors attended and I was delighted with the high level of attendance and the positive feedback received. It truly demonstrates the engagement and growing interest from staff in supporting our environmental ambitions.



Active Travel – e-bikes

We are continuing to promote more sustainable and active ways to travel across the District. Our Health, Leisure and Tourism team recently promoted initiatives to staff such as e-bikes, the Cycle to Work scheme and route-planning tools. The Council currently has four e-bikes available for staff use, supporting more sustainable commuting and travel to meetings. The Chief Executive and I recently took advantage of the scheme and used the bikes to travel to different locations across the District.

Building on this momentum, the Active Travel Working Group is continuing to encourage take-up. In July, they will host an e-bike 'try it' session, giving staff the opportunity to experience riding an e-bike. This will be followed by an Active Travel Bingo challenge in August, designed to encourage teams to get involved and travel more actively, using an e-bike.





Councillor Ward Improvement Scheme Launched

Following Cabinet approval, I am proud to announce that the Councillor Ward Improvement Scheme will launch on 1 July. This pilot project has been created to give all Councillors up to £3,000 to support their local communities. I have thoughts on how this will be used in my own ward and look forward to hearing about the initiatives and projects that fellow Councillors put forward. I would encourage all fellow Councillors to review the criteria and identify how best to allocate the funding for the benefit of as many projects as possible. Looking forward I will be excited to reviewing the pilot next year.



Growing and supporting our economy

Job and Skills Fair

I'm pleased to share some extra follow-up information about our first Job and Skills Fair of the year which was attended by more than 100 people looking for information on jobs, training and further learning. More than half of the attendees were young people aged 16 to 24, seeking help in taking those first steps to employment. Following on from this, several in-person one-to-one sessions were organised, offering a wrap-round support service to further assist individuals in gaining the employment or upskilling they wish to pursue. Our own Business Support offer was also promoted at the fair with a specific stand, receiving positive engagement during the day.

Business Grants Boost to Small Businesses

As you know, our support offering for small and medium-sized businesses grew in April with the launch of the Blaby Business Grant scheme. The pilot initiative has a pot of



£25,000 to help local businesses grow, improve shop fronts or reduce their carbon footprint.

I am proud of the micro-businesses that make up 90% of companies in the District and believe that schemes like this are an important way of showing the business community that we are here to help them flourish.



Keeping you safe and healthy

Blow the Whistle Campaign

The World Cup is well and truly upon us, having kicked off on 11 June. While the tournament is a source of pride and pleasure for most people there is a sobering statistic which rears its head during every football championship around the dramatic rise in domestic abuse. Shocking figures reveal when the English national team win or draw the number of domestic abuse reports rise by around 26% while if the team loses it jumps by a staggering 38%.

This is why we are backing Blow the Whistle, an initiative from charity First Light using the power of sport to challenge domestic abuse and sexual violence. Highlighting the positive and unifying aspects of sport, Blow the Whistle encourages people to recognise abuse, speak up safely and connect to specialist assistance. Linking in with our continued support of the White Ribbon Campaign, which urges action to end violence against women and girls, we want to be clear that abuse must be stopped. Please spread the message and make sure people are aware that we have teams who can help if anyone is concerned about themselves or others.

Taxi Inspections

Taxis licensed by us must be inspected every six months to ensure they are in good condition and legally road-worthy not only for the safety of customers but also the driver and other road users. However, we also carry out sporadic inspections as part of a proactive approach to taxi safety. Such an exercise was carried out recently in partnership with Leicestershire Police. Specific operators, some with a history of compliance issues, were asked to attend the event at the Council's Whetstone depot and nine vehicles were inspected. Of the nine taxis examined, three failed on defects ranging from engine oil leaks to tyre faults. The operator whose car failed on the oil leak was later randomly stopped by the police in another taxi, which also failed due to collision damage. Its taxi plate was removed, meaning it would remain off the road until repairs were made. Thanks to our licensing team and the police for doing sterling work in keeping our taxis safe.





Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

Meeting the Youth Council

Very recently I and a number of fellow Councillors from all parties had the pleasure of meeting up with members of our Youth Council to hear about the issues that matter most to them. This year their focus is on Habits that Harm, Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime and Tackling Sexism. It was really encouraging to see such passion, honesty and ideas from this group of young people. These meetings to support our Youth Council, to listen and engage are really important for us as we work to improve the lives of our young people across the District.



Food Waste Success

Our new weekly food waste collection service has now been going since the end of March and despite the reservations of some residents at the start, has been an unreserved success. Figures show up until the end of May we had collected an astonishing 491 tonnes of food, saving it from landfill and instead going to a specialist plant to create green energy and fertiliser for farmers. To put the 491 tonnes into perspective, that's the equivalent of 98 African elephants, nine fully loaded Boeing 737 passenger planes or 41 double-decker buses. Thanks to everyone in the Council for playing their part in making the service such a success and thanks to our residents for embracing this amazing scheme.



New Chairperson

At our Annual Council meeting in May we said farewell to outgoing Chairman, Councillor Roy Denney and welcomed his successor Councillor Janet Forey, who has represented Narborough and Littlethorpe for the last seven years. Councillor has chosen Rainbows Hospice as her charity of the year, a cause especially close to her heart as she has worked at the Rainbows charity shop in the centre of Blaby for the last nine year. A stalwart of the community who helps neighbours with shopping and collects money for Loros every month, I'm sure Councillor Forey will be an incredible ambassador for the District over the next year.



Sector Recognition

Members will know that Lightbulb is hosted and managed by Blaby on behalf of the other authorities in the county. Its aim is to keep people safe, well and independent in their homes for longer and focuses on residents who are elderly, disabled or may be on low incomes. It brings together a range of support, such as aids, adaptations, home gadgets and improvements, hospital discharge support and hoarding interventions. A number of innovative pilot programmes are also funded and delivered across the county under the partnership and one programme, led by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council - the Housing and Respiratory Illness Pilot - was recently shortlisted in the LGC Awards 2026, ultimately taking home silver in the Public/Public Partnership category. The initiative offers support in identifying and tackling damp, mould and cold conditions that contribute to respiratory illness. The aim is to reduce hospital readmission rates by targeting the substandard housing conditions which directly exacerbate severe respiratory illness. This



is further acknowledgement of how the Lightbulb programmes and partnership working directly and positively impact residents in addressing health inequalities.

