

Blaby District Council
Council

Date of Meeting 27 January 2026

Title of Report **Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution following NPPF and new Standard Method published December 2024 (December 2025)**

Lead Member This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan

Report Author **Cllr. Mike Shirley - Planning and Strategic Growth**

Strategic Themes Development Strategy Manager

All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report provides information on a Statement of Common Ground which has been prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to demonstrate effective cooperation and joint working in plan making. The Statement of Common Ground has been produced in response to the new national policy, known as the Standard Method, published in December 2024. It also provides, for information, an update on national planning policy guidance in respect of Duty to Cooperate and Submission deadline, relevant to the Statement of Common Ground.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval for Council to sign the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Statement of Common Ground.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That Council approves the signing of the Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution following National Planning Policy Framework and new Standard Method published December 2024 (December 2025) (Appendix 1 to this report).

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To continue to maintain effective cooperation that Blaby District Council must fulfil to progress the emerging Local Plan.

4. Matters to consider

4. Background

What is a Statement of Common Ground?

A Statement of Common Ground is a formal written document used in the plan-making process to demonstrate collaboration between authorities and relevant strategic bodies. It records the cooperation maintained between parties and clarifies agreed evidence on strategic matters such as housing needs. It provides proof of evidence of cooperation at Examination.

The June 2022 Statement of Common Ground

A Statement of Common Ground was produced in 2022 which apportioned unmet need in the Housing Market Area up to 2036. This gave Blaby District Council a housing requirement of 687 dwellings per annum. Council approved the signing of the previous version of the Statement of Common Ground on the 19 July 2022.

Since this time, the new Government have issued a revised National Planning Policy Framework and new housing targets, known as the 'Standard Method' for Local Planning Authorities. This report sets out the new Statement of Common Ground which includes the revised housing targets. The new Statement of Common Ground can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

The December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework update changed overall housing requirements for the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area and significantly altered distribution by removing the previously set 35% urban uplift for Leicester City. This reduced Leicester City's Local Housing Need while increasing it in most other districts. For Blaby District, the Housing Need target figure rose from 341 to 539 dwellings per annum.

Updated Housing Distribution Paper October 2025.

Following the revised National Planning Policy Framework and Standard Method (December 2024), the authorities agreed to commission an update to the 2022 Housing and Employment Needs Housing Distribution Paper. This updated Housing Distribution Paper provides the basis for apportioning unmet housing need across the Housing Market Area in line with the new standard methodology, specifically for those authorities due to undertake their Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication. This includes Blaby District Council.

Housing Distribution Update

The Housing Distribution Paper (Appendix 2) replaces the 2022 version. It establishes that Leicester City will continue to struggle to meet its housing need with a worsening position anticipated post 2036. The Housing Distribution Paper apportions Leicester City's unmet housing need across the Leicestershire districts. The apportionment of the unmet need was informed by the functional relationship with Leicester City, including commuting patterns and migration flows. The table below sets out the new housing allocation (Standard Methodology) for each Local Planning Authority and the contribution each local planning authority will make to Leicester City's unmet need.

Table 1: Local Housing Need, Standard Method, May 2025

	Revised Standard Method (December 2024)	Proposed Housing Requirement dpa	Contribution to Unmet Need dpa	% Contribution	Plan End Date*
Blaby	539	654	115	25.1	2042
Charnwood	992	1,133	141	30.8	2046
Harborough	735	797	62	13.5	2046
Hinckley & Bosworth	663	711	48	10.5	2045
Melton	369	388	19	4.2	2046
NW Leicestershire	617	690	73	15.9	2042
Oadby & Wigston	389	389	0	0	2042
Leicestershire Total	4,304	4,762	458	100	

Blaby District contributes a significant proportion of the City's unmet need which is evidenced based in the report methodology. However this is primarily due to our proximity to the City, our considerable shared boundary in numerous locations as well as the demonstrable movement of the population through transport corridors.

As shown in the table above, the Housing Distribution Paper and Statement of Common Ground assumes that Oadby and Wigston will just be able to meet its own need from a land supply position but not be able to accept any unmet need from Leicester. This is based on evidence undertaken by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council on developable and deliverable land to accommodate the increase in their housing target figure of 189 to 389 homes per annum.

Implications for Blaby District

Officers have been working with their counterparts from the other local planning authorities within the Housing Market Area in the appointment and management of the Housing Distribution. It is the view of officers that this is robust evidence based apportionment of unmet need within the Housing Market Area.

Blaby's housing allocation will be 654, which is formed of 539 of Blaby housing need and 115 of unmet Leicester City housing need. This is less than the allocation of 687 under the previous Statement of Common Ground which was formed of 341 of Blaby housing need and a significantly higher apportionment of unmet Leicester City housing need of 346.

The appended Statement of Common Ground is clear at paragraphs 5.4 - 5.5 that the next stage of work is for each individual local planning authority to test their allocated figure through their plan making, to understand whether the target is deliverable at the local level. Officers are progressing this evidence to understand the deliverable capacity within the district as part of the work to inform the Regulation 19 Local Plan which will be considered by Council in April.

Local Plan Submission Deadline

In his statement the Housing and Planning Minister confirmed that Local Plans being prepared under the current planning system, which the emerging Blaby Local Plan is, must be submitted to Government for examination by 31 December 2026. If this deadline is missed, work on a new plan, under the emerging planning system must be produced. This would result in a delay of uncertain amount of time to Local Plan adoption and restoration of plan led decision making. This will result in a continuation of speculative planning applications being submitted and being considered by planning committee under the tilted balance.

Removal of the legal pass/fail Duty to Cooperate Test

On 27th November 2025, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook confirmed removal of the legal Duty to Cooperate test. The removal of the duty to cooperate legal test is significant in assisting Local Planning Authorities to progress their Local Plans. In his statement the Housing and Planning Minister clarified that local planning authorities must continue to collaborate across boundaries and made specific reference for the need to continue to do so on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas. Inspectors will check compliance with National Planning Policy Framework policies on effective cooperation at examination.

The Statement of Common Ground at Appendix 1 was in production in advance of the minister's statement and as such reference remains to Duty to Cooperate. However, in anticipation of this, wording referring to joint working has been added to reflect this transition and the retention of the need to maintain effective cooperation on strategic matters such as housing needs.

Why should Blaby District Council sign the Statement of Common Ground?

The Statement of Common Ground remains a key part of each individual authority's local plan evidence to demonstrate they have complied with the Tests of Soundness that an Inspector will test the Local Plan against during the Examination in Public. If an Inspector determines the Local Plan fails the Tests of Soundness, the Local Plan will fail the examination and cannot be adopted by the Local Planning Authority. Not signing the Statement of Common Ground therefore carries a substantial risk to the council. Consequently, in the case of Blaby, the local planning authority will continue to be vulnerable to speculative planning applications with increased challenges to deliver strategic infrastructure. It is therefore essential that council sign the attached Statement of Common Ground to allow the progression of the Local Plan work.

The Statement of Common Ground, as appended to this report at Appendix 1, is also being considered by other authorities in Leicestershire with the same recommendation for approval.

4. Proposal(s)

It is proposed that approval is given for Council to sign the Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution following National Planning Policy Framework and new Standard Method published December 2024 (December 2025) (Appendix 1 to this report).

4.3 Relevant Consultations

Relevant internal consultations have taken place. External consultation on this matter is not required or appropriate. Consultations will take place separately on the emerging Local Plan.

4.4 Significant Issues

There are no significant issues directly arising from this report.

5. Environmental impact

5.1 No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment is required for this report.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

6.1 There are no cost implications to this report over and above the provision made within existing budgets.

The Statement of Common Ground further cements joint working opportunities for evidence production for plan making across Leicestershire. This includes the evidence referred to throughout this report. Blaby District Council has made a financial contribution to pay for this evidence equal to that of the other authorities in Leicestershire.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1 The risks are set out in the table below.

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Without the Statement of Common Ground being approved, the Council will struggle to demonstrate at Examination that it has maintained cooperation on the strategic cross boundary matter of housing needs. This poses a significant risk to adoption and the council will remain vulnerable to speculative developments across the District.	Acknowledgement of the need to agree the revised housing allocation, as outlined in the Statement of Common Ground, will ensure the Council can control housing development across the District.
The potential to not maintain cooperation on strategic matters and the demonstration of this through Statement of Common Ground.	Continuing to work collaboratively with the authorities across Leicestershire in evidence production; and ensuring the cooperation is maintained throughout the production of the New Local Plan. Approval for Council to sign the Statement of Common Ground is part of this process.

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 The alternative option would be to reject the Statement of Common Ground. However, in doing so Council would be compromising the ability as a local planning authority to demonstrate collaboration is maintained and therefore progress the emerging Local Plan for the District and allow the local planning authority to submit by the deadline of 31 December 2026.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution following National Planning Policy Framework and new Standard Method published December 2024 (December 2025) (to follow)
Appendix 2 – Updated Housing Distribution Paper, (November, 2025) (to follow)

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 24 May 2022 Council Report.

11. Report author's contact details

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