Blaby District Council

the heart of Leicestershire

Blaby District Housing Strategy
2026 to 2031

Contents Page

1. Foreword by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing....3

2. Executive Summary....4

3. Key Achievements 2021 to 2026....5

4. National and Regional Policy Context....6

5. Links to Other Strategies....9

6. Housing Need, Demographic Change and the Local Housing Market....11

7. Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention....20

8. Specialist and Supported Housing....23

9. Housing Quality, Safety and Standards....28

10. Private Rented Sector....30

11. Climate Change and Housing....32

12. Strategic Priorities....33

13. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion....37

14. Governance and Partnerships....38

15. Funding and Investment Sources....39

Foreword by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing

A good home is the foundation of a healthy, secure and fulfilling life. It provides stability for individuals and families, supports educational achievement and employment opportunities, and contributes to stronger, more resilient communities. Housing is therefore one of the most important services that the Council helps to shape and influence.

I am pleased to introduce the **Blaby District Housing Strategy 2026–2031**, which sets out our vision for ensuring that everyone in the District has access to a safe, suitable, affordable and sustainable home. The strategy has been developed in response to the significant housing challenges facing our communities.

Blaby remains an attractive place to live, work and invest, but we recognise that many households face increasing pressures in securing and maintaining suitable housing. Rising house prices and rents, growing demand for affordable housing, an ageing population, increasing complexity of need and pressures on homelessness services all require a coordinated and ambitious response. At the same time, expectations around housing quality, building safety, accessibility and environmental sustainability continue to evolve.

This strategy provides a clear framework for meeting these challenges over the next five years. It recognises that housing is about more than bricks and mortar; it is about creating opportunities, improving health and wellbeing, supporting independence and enabling people to thrive. The actions we take through this strategy will help to deliver stronger communities, reduce inequalities and ensure that housing plays a positive role in achieving the wider ambitions of the Council.

Our priorities focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing, ensuring that new and existing homes meet changing needs, preventing homelessness wherever possible, improving housing quality and safety, supporting vulnerable residents and contributing to our climate change objectives. These priorities are grounded in a robust evidence base and reflect the issues that matter most to local people.

However, successful delivery cannot be achieved by the Council alone. Working in partnership with registered providers, developers, landlords, health and care organisations, voluntary and community groups, government agencies and residents themselves will be essential. By working together, we can maximise resources, unlock opportunities and deliver better outcomes for communities across the district.

As Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, I am committed to ensuring that housing remains at the heart of the Council's ambitions for Blaby. This strategy demonstrates our determination to respond positively to current challenges while planning confidently for the future. We will continue to monitor progress, listen to residents and partners to adapt our approach where necessary to ensure that our actions deliver meaningful and lasting improvements.

The publication of this strategy comes at a time of transition for local government, however despite changes of administrative form and function, the challenges of housing need will remain, therefore I trust this strategy will help shape future priorities.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy. I look forward to working with our partners and communities to deliver its objectives and to create a district where everyone has the opportunity to live in a home that meets their needs and supports their aspirations.

Susan Findlay
Homelessness, Housing & Community Safety Portfolio Holder
Blaby District Council



Executive Summary

This Housing Strategy sets out the council's long-term approach to ensuring that everyone in the area can access a safe, secure, affordable and sustainable home. Housing is central to health, wellbeing, economic opportunity and community resilience. The strategy therefore brings together the council's role as housing authority, planning authority, place-shaper, landlord, commissioner and partner to respond to current pressures and plan confidently for future need.

Local housing markets are under significant pressure. Demand for affordable housing continues to exceed supply; many households face rising rents, overcrowding or insecurity; and homelessness and temporary accommodation pressures remain acute nationally and locally. At the same time, the council must respond to an ageing population, the need for more specialist and supported housing, higher expectations around housing standards and safety, and the urgent requirement to reduce carbon emissions from homes.

The strategy is built around a clear ambition: to create thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities where homes meet the needs of existing and future residents. To achieve this, the council will focus on increasing the supply of new homes, especially affordable and social rented homes; making best use of existing stock; improving standards across all tenures; preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity; supporting residents with care or support needs to live independently; and ensuring housing contributes to wider objectives for climate action, regeneration, health and inclusive growth.

Delivery will require strong partnership working. The council will work with residents, registered providers, developers, landlords, health and social care partners, voluntary and community organisations, regional bodies and government agencies to align investment, unlock sites, improve services and target support where it is most needed. The strategy also recognises the importance of good evidence: decisions will be informed by housing needs analysis, market intelligence, resident insight and equality impact considerations.

The strategy outlines 5 core priorities to drive focus and resource allocation:

- Strategic Priority 1: Increase the Supply of Homes that Meet Local Needs
- Strategic Priority 2: Prevent Homelessness and Promote Housing Stability
- Strategic Priority 3: Support Health, Independence and Inclusive Communities
- Strategic Priority 4: Improve Housing Quality, Safety and Standards
- Strategic Priority 5: Deliver Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Homes and Communities

The council's priorities will be translated into a practical action plan with measurable outcomes, clear responsibilities and regular monitoring. Progress will be reviewed through appropriate governance arrangements, with reporting focused on delivery of new homes, homelessness prevention, housing quality and safety, private rented sector standards, supported housing provision, resident outcomes, investment and value for money. This will allow the strategy to remain responsive to changing policy, funding and market conditions.

By taking a whole-system approach to housing, the strategy aims to deliver better homes, stronger neighbourhoods and fairer outcomes. It provides a framework for coordinated action over the life of the strategy, ensuring that housing supports the council's wider ambitions for inclusive, healthy, safe and sustainable places.

Key Achievements 2021 to 2026

The previous Housing Strategy covered the period 2021 to 2026 and had a number of clear objectives that aimed to deliver on 4 strategic priorities. The priorities were:

- Increasing the supply of affordable homes
- Provide specialist housing for vulnerable groups
- Prevent Homelessness and end Rough Sleeping in Blaby District
- To minimise the environmental impact of the existing housing stock and future housing development.

Over the period of the last Strategy a number of achievements have been delivered. These include:

388 affordable houses delivered over the period of the Strategy

Strong partnership working with Registered Providers, Homes England and other Leicestershire local authorities that has delivered effective developments and projects that meet the needs of Blaby District.

Worked in partnership with emh homes to deliver insulation and housing improvements works that utilised Warm Homes and Social Housing Decarbonisation funding to ensure EPC level C is being met.

Developed new supported housing to meet the needs of single people with mental health issues or learning disabilities at Henson House providing 11 self contained flats and Frost Court Blaby which provides 14 self contained flats for people with mental health issues. These schemes have been developed in partnership with emh homes, NCHA and Norton showing the strength and effectiveness of those partnerships.

Utilised LAHF funding to purchase 15 properties that enable high quality temporary accommodation to be offered to people suffering from homelessness instead of using bed and breakfast accommodation.

Delivered positive outcomes through the Lightbulb Project, a multidisciplinary service led by Blaby District Council that supports residents across the county who cannot leave hospital because they lack suitable accommodation, or who are struggling to remain at home due to medical needs. Between 2021 and 2024, 248 Blaby households received grant support to adapt or access suitable housing. This included 202 Disabled Facilities Grants for major adaptations, 36 grants for minor adaptations and 10 Hospital Discharge grants for essential furnishings, white goods or new accommodation. Between February 2023 and October 2024, the Hospital Enablement Team supported 148 people ready for discharge but unable to access secure housing, helping with homelessness referrals, private rented accommodation, furniture, white goods and family negotiations.

Homelessness has been prevented through the work of the Blaby District Council Resident Support team which supports residents with a wide range of issues including maximising income (such as claiming benefits), addressing housing arrears and utility payments, budgeting and debt management and applying for grants and funding. The Resident Support Team have supported 1330 individuals and families with a variety of the above issues between 2020 and 2024.

National and Regional Policy Context

The Housing Strategy is shaped by a changing national and regional policy environment. National policy places strong emphasis on increasing housing supply, improving affordability, raising standards across all tenures, preventing homelessness, supporting vulnerable households and ensuring that housing contributes to wider ambitions for health, economic growth, climate resilience and sustainable communities.

The National Planning Policy Framework provides the main national planning framework for England. It expects local planning authorities to plan positively for sustainable development, maintain up-to-date local plans, meet identified housing needs as far as possible, make effective use of land, support well-designed places and respond to climate change, flooding and environmental constraints. For this strategy, the Framework reinforces the need to align housing, planning, infrastructure, design quality, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

Recent and proposed planning reforms continue to focus on boosting housing delivery, strengthening plan-led development, reviewing how local housing need is assessed and supporting cross-boundary strategic planning.

A key requirement is the demonstration of a deliverable five-year housing land supply, ensuring a pipeline of development sites is available. Failure to demonstrate this supply can result in a presumption in favour of sustainable development, reducing local control over planning decisions.

Reforms introduced through the **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** further strengthen national oversight, including the introduction of National Development Management Policies, reinforcing the need for local authorities to proactively enable housing delivery and align growth with infrastructure and economic priorities.

National housing policy also places renewed emphasis on affordable and social rented housing, regeneration, brownfield land, housing quality and the role of Homes England, registered providers and local authorities in unlocking delivery.

These changes underline the importance of ensuring that the council has robust evidence on housing need, affordability, land supply, infrastructure capacity and delivery constraints, and that it works constructively with neighbouring authorities and regional partners where housing markets and infrastructure needs cross administrative boundaries.

The homelessness and rough sleeping policy framework requires local authorities to prevent homelessness wherever possible, intervene earlier, reduce reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation and provide effective support for households at risk. This strategy supports those duties by linking housing options, homelessness prevention, domestic abuse support, temporary accommodation, private rented sector access, supported housing and wider services that help residents sustain accommodation.

The legislative and regulatory framework for housing in England has undergone significant reform in recent years, establishing a more interventionist, standards-driven, and outcomes-focused system. This evolving framework strengthens expectations on housing quality, tenant safety, environmental performance, and housing delivery, while increasing transparency and accountability across all tenures. Within this context, the Council—despite no longer retaining housing stock—continues to play a central statutory and strategic role in ensuring that residents have access to safe, suitable, and affordable homes.

Housing quality and safety remain central to national policy. Standards for social housing, building safety, private sector enforcement, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, energy efficiency and future decent homes expectations all affect how councils work with landlords, registered providers, homeowners and tenants. The strategy will support action to improve existing homes, tackle poor conditions, promote tenant rights and encourage investment in safe, warm and energy-efficient housing.

These requirements are operationalised through the **Housing Act 2004**, which introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This risk-based framework requires local authorities to identify and act on serious hazards within residential properties, supported by a wide range of enforcement powers including improvement notices, prohibition orders, and civil penalties.

Most recently the introduction of **Awaab's Law**, establishes legally enforceable timeframes for addressing serious hazards such as damp and mould. From October 2025, social landlords must investigate and rectify such hazards within defined periods, with further phases extending these requirements to additional risks. This marks a significant shift toward time-bound compliance and a stronger focus on health outcomes. It is also intended that these duties are introduced to the private rented sector in time.

The 2004 Act also established the regulatory framework for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), including mandatory licensing for higher-risk properties and the ability for councils to implement selective or additional licensing schemes.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 represented a fundamental shift in the oversight of social housing, introducing a more proactive and interventionist regulatory approach focused on tenant safety, service quality, and accountability. A key feature of this reform is the replacement of reactive regulation with a system based on proactive inspection and early intervention, supported by enhanced powers for the Regulator of Social Housing. The role of the Housing Ombudsman has also been significantly strengthened, forming a key pillar of the regulatory framework alongside the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 introduces wide-ranging reforms to the private rented sector, fundamentally reshaping tenancy arrangements and strengthening tenant protections. The abolition of Section 21 "no fault" evictions (from 2026) significantly improves security of tenure, with all tenancies moving to a periodic model. This reduces the risk of homelessness and promotes greater stability, while requiring landlords to rely on defined legal grounds for possession.

A key development is the extension of minimum housing standards into the private rented sector, including the application of the Decent Homes Standard and as outlined the extension of principles underpinning Awaab's Law. This reflects a clear policy objective to achieve consistency across tenures, ensuring all residents have access to safe and decent housing.

The **Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024** introduces significant changes aimed at improving fairness and transparency for leaseholders. These changes are intended to rebalance relationships between residents, freeholders, and managing agents, with implications for mixed-tenure developments and long-term housing market structures.

Climate change and net zero commitments provide a further strategic driver. Housing has a significant role in reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, lowering fuel poverty and making communities more resilient to extreme weather. This means that new development, retrofit, decarbonisation programmes, sustainable construction, green infrastructure and climate adaptation should be considered as core housing priorities rather than separate environmental issues.

Regionally, the **East Midlands context** is important. Devolution, regional investment planning, transport and infrastructure priorities, skills, employment growth and strategic planning all influence local housing demand and delivery. The East Midlands devolution deal and the work of regional partners highlight the need to connect housing with inclusive growth, transport access, regeneration, environmental improvement and investment in infrastructure. For Blaby District, this means ensuring the strategy reflects both local needs and wider functional housing market relationships across Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

At **county and sub-regional level,** housing issues are closely linked to health and social care, adult social care, children's services, domestic abuse, community safety, transport, economic development and infrastructure planning. Partnership working with Leicestershire authorities, Leicester City Council, Rutland where relevant, registered providers, health partners, Homes England, voluntary and community organisations and the private sector will be essential to deliver homes and services that meet residents' needs. The impact of Local government Reorganisation will also need to be taken into account in the delivery of this Strategy.

These national policy agendas provide a context through which local strategies including housing have been formed reflecting wider environmental, social, and economic drivers interpreted and shaped by local needs



Links To Other Strategies

At the time of preparing this strategy, consultation with respect to the reorganisation of local government in the region were ongoing. At present local government in Leicestershire is based on a two-tier model with a county and district form.



In future, new unitary authorities will be created by the merger of the county and district model, but the final form of this has yet to be confirmed. Whatever the final configuration there will be a realignment of functions and priorities reflecting the revised operational areas of the new authorities and their socio-economic needs and challenges. The following therefore reflect the current operational environment but provide a context for future development.

The focus of this section is to provide an overarching context within which the Housing Strategy has been formed. Other strategies such as the Council's Homelessness and Net Zero strategies and the role of housing in addressing these are addressed directly in the section and core text.

The Blaby District Plan 2024–2028

The Blaby District Plan provides the primary local context for the Housing Strategy, recognising housing as fundamental to economic growth, health, wellbeing and sustainable communities. Key housing challenges include delivering around 687 homes per year to 2036, increasing the supply of affordable housing, preventing homelessness and maintaining the Council's zero rough sleeping ambition. The Plan also emphasises meeting diverse housing needs through accessible and adaptable homes, supporting independent living, addressing digital exclusion, contributing to net zero carbon targets, and ensuring that new housing growth is accompanied by infrastructure, green spaces and active travel opportunities. Partnership working and effective use of limited resources are identified as essential to delivering these objectives.

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2024–2026

The County Council's Strategic Plan highlights the important role of housing in achieving its priorities of creating clean and green environments, great communities, improved opportunities, a strong economy and safe, healthy lives. For housing, the key issues are improving energy efficiency, delivering low-carbon homes, supporting population growth through adequate housing supply, and ensuring development is supported by infrastructure such as transport and schools. The Plan also stresses the need for affordable and specialist housing, particularly for older people and residents with additional needs, alongside housing-related interventions that help reduce inequalities, support independent living and improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021–2030

The Economic Growth Strategy identifies housing as a critical enabler of economic development and inclusive prosperity. As the area seeks to grow its technology, innovation and high-value sectors, there will be increased demand for homes in accessible and well-connected locations. Key housing considerations include maintaining affordability to support workforce recruitment and retention, enabling labour market mobility, and ensuring that residents can access employment opportunities. The Strategy also highlights the need for affordable, low-carbon homes and for housing delivery to be aligned with investment in transport, digital connectivity and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring that economic growth and housing growth are planned together.

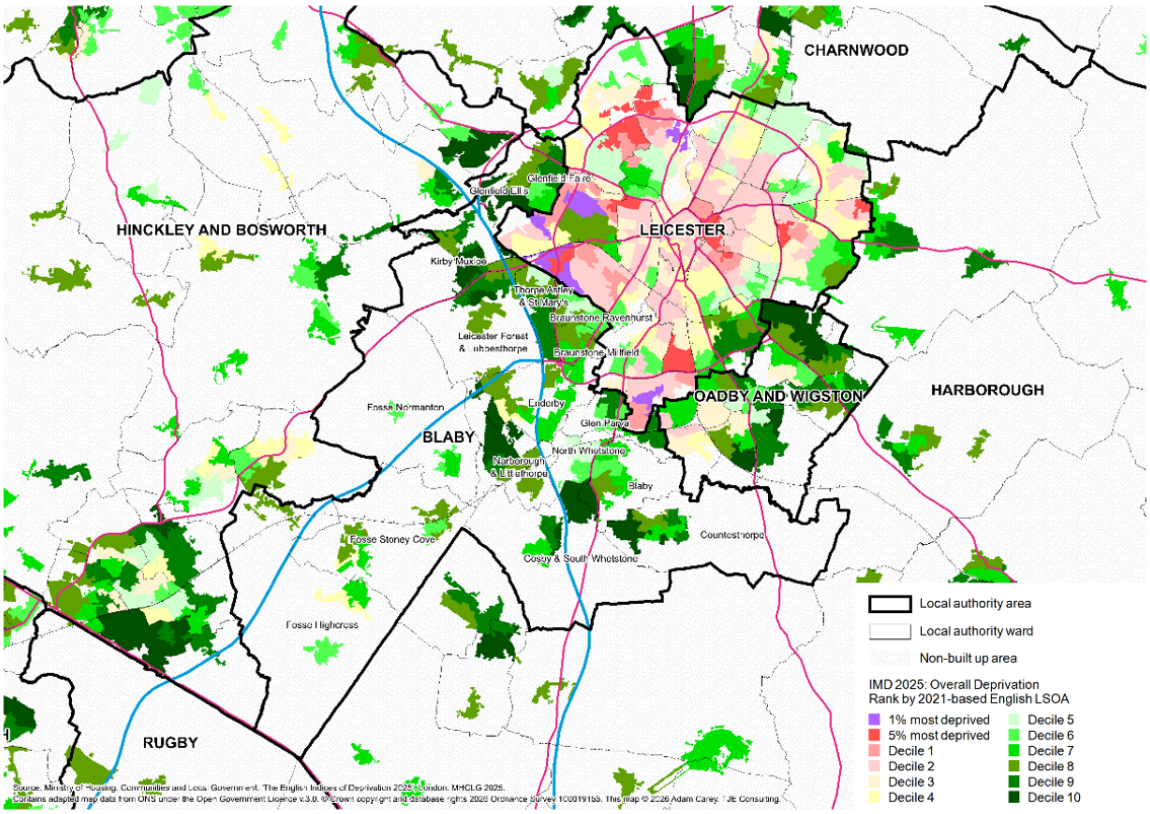
Leicestershire Public Health Strategy 2022–2027

The Public Health Strategy reinforces the strong relationship between housing and health outcomes, identifying housing quality, affordability, fuel poverty and housing stability as key determinants of physical and mental wellbeing. The Strategy recognises poor housing conditions as a contributor to health inequalities and supports a preventative approach focused on improving housing standards and reducing risks before they lead to crises. For the Housing Strategy, this means prioritising healthy homes, tackling fuel poverty, preventing homelessness, and ensuring housing contributes to wider objectives around reducing inequalities, improving quality of life and supporting healthier communities through partnership-based delivery.



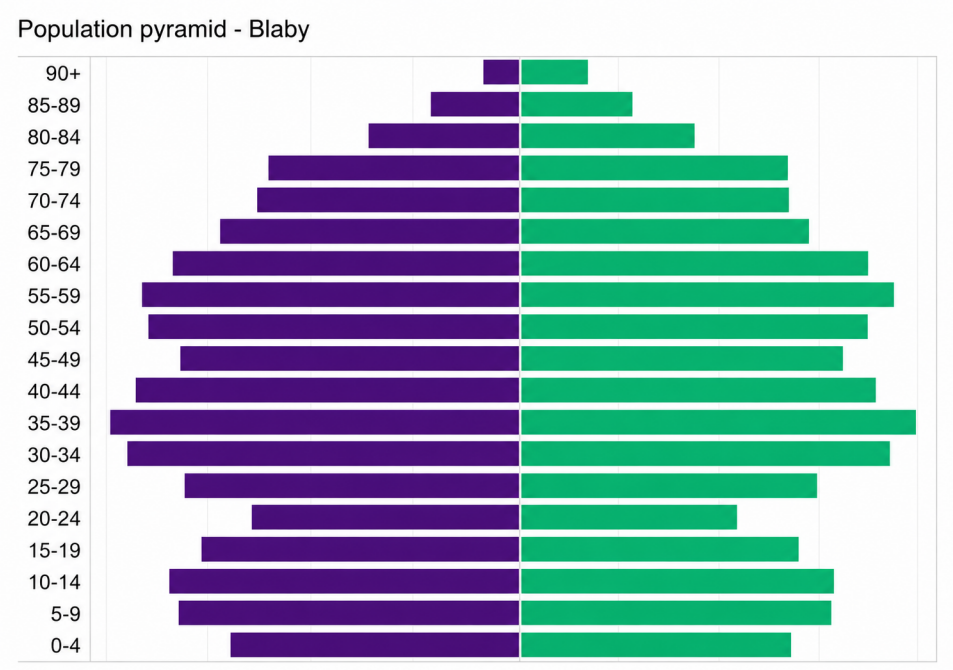
Housing Need, Demographic Change and the Local Housing Market

Blaby is generally recognised as an affluent district within Leicestershire, benefitting from its proximity to Leicester, strong transport links, attractive villages and a successful local economy. However, this overall picture masks pockets of hidden deprivation linked to housing affordability, access to services, fuel poverty and health inequalities. While no neighbourhoods fall within the most deprived 10% nationally, the evidence identifies localised challenges that can have a significant impact on housing outcomes and wellbeing. Housing conditions, affordability pressures and access to suitable accommodation remain important contributors to inequality across the district.

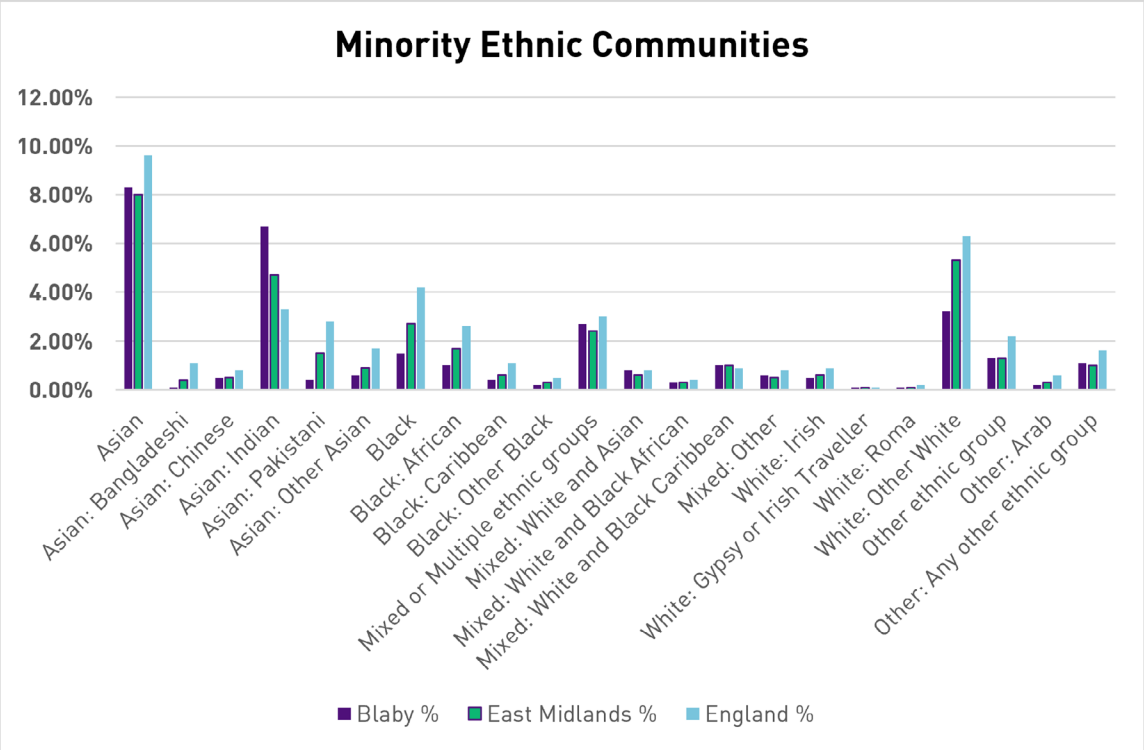


IMD Map Blaby and local area

Blaby has experienced sustained population growth over the last decade, increasing by around 13–15% to a current population of approximately 108,000 residents. Growth has exceeded regional and national averages and has largely been driven by internal migration associated with housing and economic growth. While growth has occurred across all age groups, the district has an older age profile than the national average and is continuing to age. The population aged 65 and over has grown by approximately 18% over the last decade and is expected to increase substantially over the strategy period. By 2042, more than 23% of residents are expected to be aged 65 or over, whilst the number of residents aged over 85 is forecast to increase significantly. This will have major implications for housing demand, health services and support provision.



Alongside an ageing population, the district is becoming more diverse. Around 18% of residents now come from ethnic minority communities and the rate of growth amongst these groups has significantly exceeded that of the White British population. The groups with the largest growth are Asian and White: other. Ethnic minority households tend to be younger than average and national evidence suggests they are more likely to experience overcrowding and affordability pressures. This reinforces the need for housing provision and services that are inclusive and responsive to increasingly diverse communities.



Disability and health needs are also becoming increasingly important housing considerations. Approximately 16% of residents are disabled and around 30% of households contain at least one person with a disability. Disability rates rise significantly with age, with around one-third of people over 65 experiencing some form of disability. Future projections suggest substantial increases in dementia, mobility impairments and other age-related conditions. Housing will therefore play an increasingly important role in supporting independent living, reducing pressure on health services and improving quality of life through accessible, adaptable and specialist accommodation.

The District combines a highly skilled workforce with strong economic performance. Blaby has been one of the strongest performing economies in Leicester and Leicestershire, with significant growth in employment, productivity and business activity. Evidence suggests that future housing growth could support between 12,000 and 15,400 additional jobs by 2042 through growth in the economically active population.

Housing delivery is also fundamental to the future success of the local economy. Evidence demonstrates a strong relationship between housing availability, labour market participation and economic growth. Employers increasingly rely upon access to a workforce that can afford to live locally and access employment opportunities through sustainable transport networks. If housing affordability continues to worsen, local businesses may experience increasing challenges in attracting and retaining employees, potentially constraining economic growth. Housing should therefore be viewed not simply as a social issue, but as a critical component of the District's economic infrastructure.

The Council will seek to ensure that housing growth supports wider economic priorities through the provision of affordable homes, accommodation for key workers and younger households, and housing located within sustainable communities that provide access to employment, services and education. Aligning housing delivery with economic growth objectives will help create prosperous and inclusive communities whilst supporting the District's continued competitiveness and attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Context

Blaby sits within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA), which provides the wider strategic context for future housing need. Evidence across the HMA identifies significant demographic and structural changes that will reshape housing demand over the coming decades. Population growth will continue, driven primarily by migration, but the dominant trend will be substantial growth in older age groups. Residents aged 65 and over are expected to account for more than one-third of future population growth, with particularly rapid increases amongst those aged 75 and over and 85 and over.

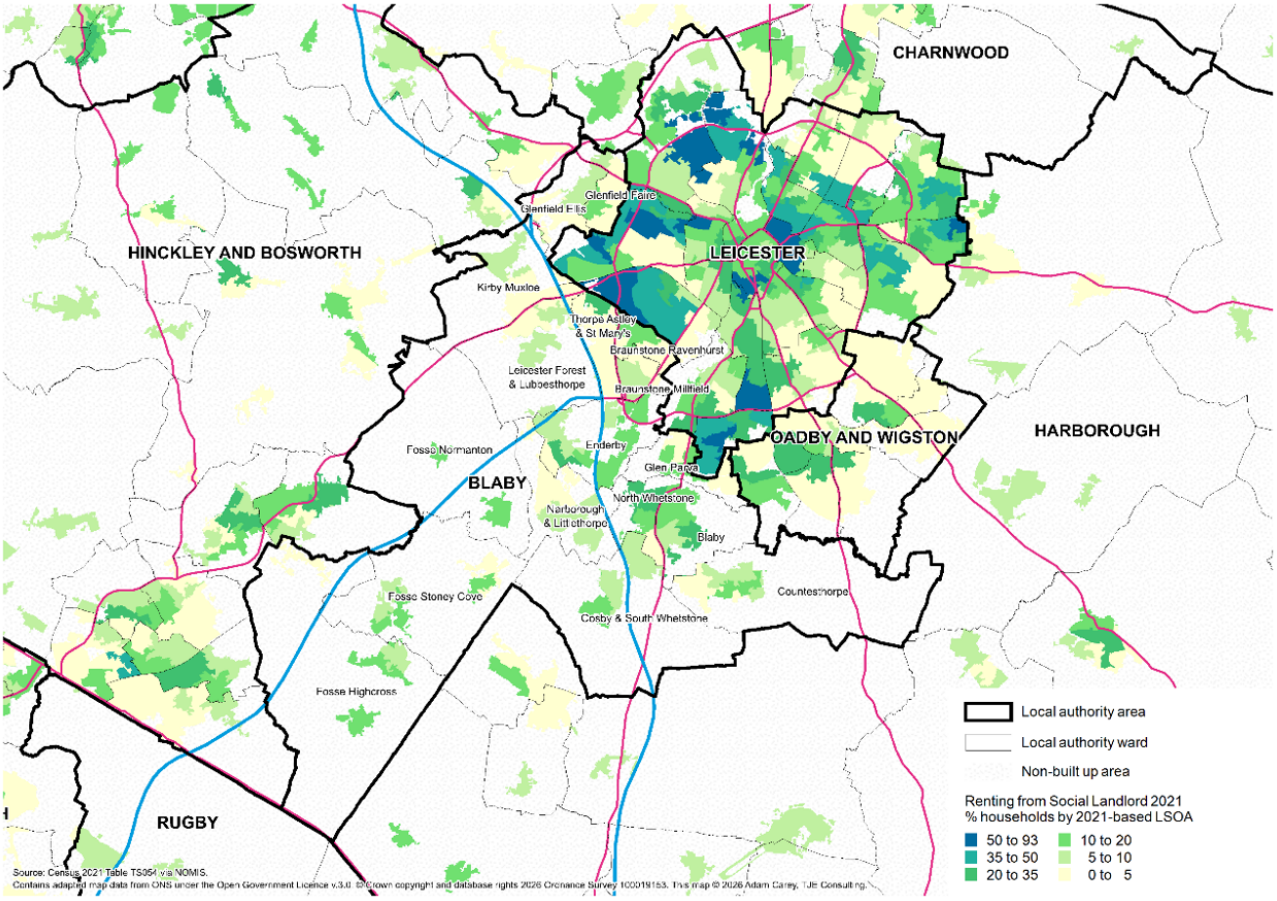
These demographic shifts are expected to change patterns of housing demand. Growth in single-person households and couples without dependent children will increase demand for smaller and more manageable homes. However, the existing housing stock remains heavily weighted towards larger family accommodation. The evidence therefore points to a growing mismatch between the homes available and the types of homes that will be required in future. While three-bedroom family housing will remain important, there is a clear need to increase provision of one and two-bedroom properties, particularly within affordable housing.

The HMA evidence also highlights inefficiencies within the housing system. High levels of under-occupation exist alongside overcrowding within rented sectors. Across Blaby, almost half of households occupy homes with at least two spare bedrooms, whilst many other households struggle to access suitable accommodation. This demonstrates that housing challenges are not simply about increasing supply but also about improving mobility within the housing market and making more effective use of existing stock. Supporting downsizing opportunities and helping people move more easily between different housing tenures and property types will therefore be an important element of future housing policy.

The evidence also identifies a growing relationship between housing, ageing and health. Increased levels of disability and care needs will drive demand for a range of specialist accommodation, including sheltered housing, extra care housing and residential care facilities. At the same time, accessibility within mainstream housing will become increasingly important. The evidence suggests that accessibility should be embedded within new housing delivery rather than treated as a specialist issue.

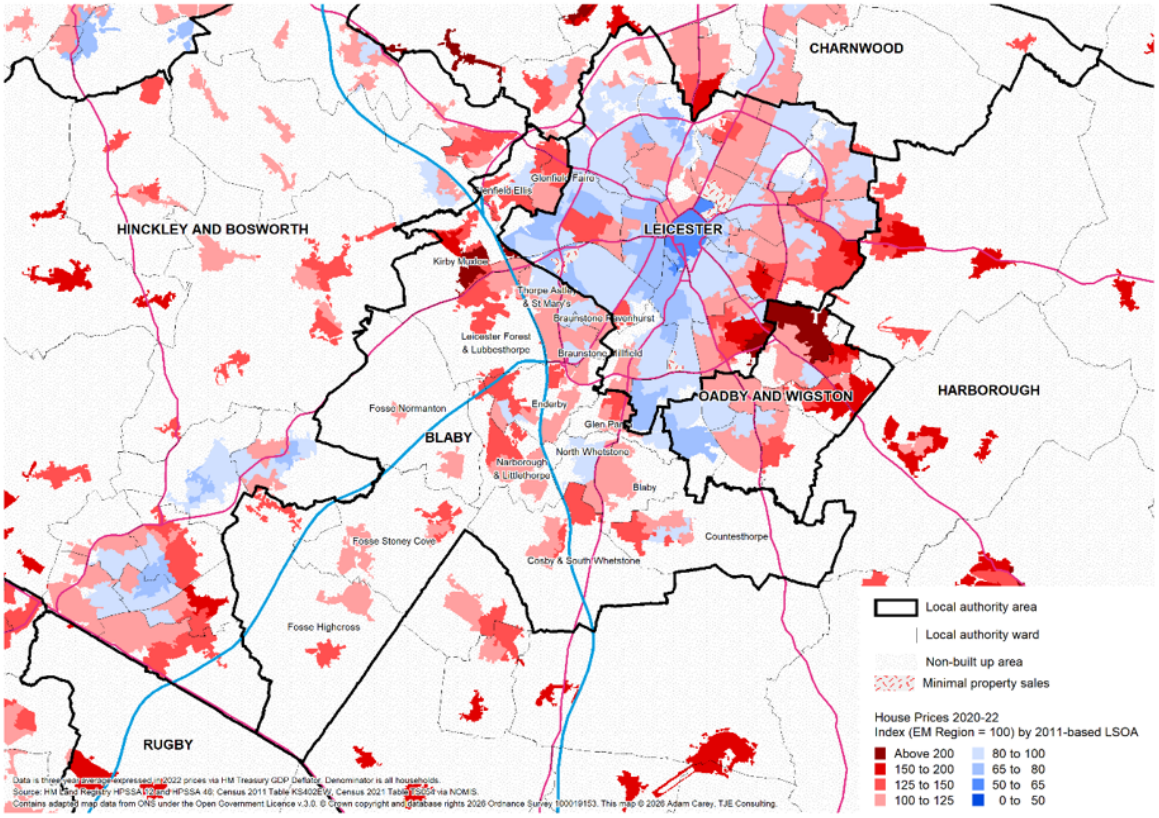
Housing Need and Affordability in Blaby

The broader HMA trends are clearly reflected in Blaby's local housing market. The district is characterised by very high levels of owner occupation, accounting for around 78–79% of households, and a relatively small social housing sector at around 8%. While this reflects overall affluence, it also limits housing options for those unable to access home ownership and restricts the availability of genuinely affordable homes.



Distribution of Social Housing Blaby and surrounding areas

Affordability is now one of the most significant housing challenges facing the district. House prices have risen by approximately 67% over the last decade, reaching around £275,000 by 2025. Private rents have also increased substantially, with average rents for a two-bedroom property reaching approximately £900 per month. Although these costs remain below national averages, they are increasingly unaffordable relative to local incomes, particularly given that average earnings in Blaby remain comparatively low within Leicestershire.



House price data mapped to Leicester and Blaby geographies

The Housing Needs Assessment identifies an **annual requirement for approximately 468 affordable homes.** Significantly, around 63% of households identified as being in need cannot afford either market housing or private rented accommodation, demonstrating that affordability challenges extend beyond access to home ownership. The evidence points to a **strong requirement for affordable rented housing, particularly social rent,** which is the tenure capable of meeting the needs of the widest range of households experiencing affordability pressures. The HNA recommends that affordable housing provision should prioritise an 80:20 split between rented and intermediate products, with the rented element focused on social rent wherever viable.

The evidence also provides guidance on future housing mix. In the market sector, around 45–50% of new homes should be three-bedroom properties, with a further 25–30% being two-bedroom homes. Affordable housing should provide a broader range of dwelling sizes, with particular emphasis on one and two-bedroom accommodation whilst retaining sufficient family housing to meet longer-term needs. This reflects both changing household structures and the need to improve movement through the housing system.

The scale of identified affordable housing need represents one of the most significant housing challenges facing the District. The Housing Needs Assessment identifies a requirement for approximately 468 affordable homes each year, substantially exceeding recent rates of delivery. Importantly, the evidence demonstrates that affordability pressures are not confined to access to home ownership. Around 63% of households identified as being in housing need are unable to afford either market housing or market rented accommodation, highlighting the extent to which housing costs have become disconnected from local incomes. This means that for many households, particularly those on lower incomes, affordable rented housing is the only realistic route to securing suitable accommodation.

The Council's evidence base highlights a significant and continuing gap between the level of affordable housing needed across Blaby District and the number of homes currently expected to be delivered. The 2026 Blaby Housing Needs Assessment identifies a need for approximately 468 affordable homes each year, compared with forecast delivery of around 75 homes in 2026/27 and 90 homes in 2027/28. Even the central forecast would therefore meet only around 16–19% of assessed annual need. Historic monitoring shows that qualifying developments have generally provided the policy-compliant level of affordable housing through planning obligations. However, overall delivery has been limited by the number and scale of eligible sites coming forward, together with viability pressures, development build-out rates and wider housing market conditions. The evidence therefore reinforces the importance of maximising affordable housing provision on all suitable developments wherever possible.

The evidence also highlights the importance of achieving a broad and appropriate mix of affordable homes to meet the needs of different households. For affordable rented housing, the 2026 HENA indicates a mix of 25–30% one-bedroom, 35–40% two-bedroom, 25–30% three-bedroom and 5–10% four-bedroom or larger homes. For affordable home ownership, the corresponding ranges are 10–15%, 40–45%, 35–40% and 5–10%. This points to a particular focus on two- and three-bedroom homes, while continuing to provide smaller homes for single people and smaller households, larger properties for families, and accessible or adaptable accommodation for older and disabled residents. These figures should be treated as a strategic starting point rather than a fixed allocation. The final mix on individual developments should be applied proportionately and informed by the scale of the affordable housing contribution, current Housing Register demand, bidding pressure, existing supply and any relevant scheme-specific evidence.

The evidence points to a particular need for genuinely affordable rented homes, especially social rented housing. Although affordable home ownership products, principally shared ownership, can meet the needs of some households, they are unlikely to be affordable to many of those experiencing the greatest housing pressures. The Housing Needs Assessment therefore recommends an indicative tenure balance of 80% rented affordable housing and 20% affordable home ownership, with social rent prioritised within the rented element wherever policy and viability allow. Addressing the scale of identified need will require the full policy-compliant affordable housing contribution to be secured wherever possible. This will need to be supported by effective partnership working with Registered Providers and developers, the active use of public-sector opportunities, and a continued focus on delivering a tenure and dwelling mix that responds to current and changing local needs.

The evidence also demonstrates that **addressing housing need is not solely a question of increasing housing numbers.** Significant levels of under-occupation exist alongside overcrowding and hidden homelessness, with almost half of households occupying homes with two or more spare bedrooms whilst many other households struggle to access suitable accommodation. Improving the efficiency of the housing system, supporting downsizing opportunities, increasing housing mobility and enabling residents to move more easily between housing tenures will therefore be important alongside new development. A successful housing strategy must seek both to increase supply and to make more effective use of the homes that already exist.

Local Plan Growth and Future Housing Supply

The emerging Blaby Local Plan establishes a long-term framework for growth to 2042. The Plan identifies a **housing requirement of approximately 11,195 homes** but allocates sufficient land to deliver almost 13,000 dwellings, incorporating a flexibility buffer to reduce the risk of future shortfalls. This provides a robust long-term housing supply position and creates capacity to respond to future changes in housing demand.

Housing growth is deliberately concentrated within the most sustainable parts of the district, principally the **Principal Urban Area,** larger villages and major strategic development locations. This approach is intended not only to provide housing supply but also to support sustainable placemaking, minimise pressure on smaller settlements, encourage active travel and maximise opportunities to align growth with infrastructure investment. Nearly half of housing growth is directed to the Principal Urban Area, with significant further growth in larger villages and strategically planned new communities.

Major strategic growth locations include land West of Stoney Stanton and Whetstone Pastures Garden Community, both of which will continue delivering homes beyond the current plan period. These developments are intended to function as sustainable mixed-use communities supported by schools, healthcare, employment opportunities, community facilities, public transport and green infrastructure. The Local Plan therefore represents a **shift towards larger infrastructure-led developments** capable of accommodating long-term growth while creating high-quality places.

While much future development will be directed towards the most sustainable settlements, the Council recognises the importance of maintaining **balanced and sustainable rural communities.** This includes supporting appropriate affordable housing provision, enabling older residents to remain within their communities and ensuring that housing growth responds to locally identified needs.

The Plan also includes a **range of policy requirements designed to address identified housing needs.** These include affordable housing provision, specialist housing for older people, accessible and adaptable homes, wheelchair-user standards, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and self-build opportunities. Importantly, the Plan requires at least 40% of homes on larger sites to meet M4(2) accessibility standards and 3–5% to meet M4(3) wheelchair-user standards, closely reflecting recommendations within the Housing Needs Assessment.

While the scale of planned housing growth is substantial, evidence suggests that increasing overall numbers alone will not resolve housing pressures. Delivery of affordable housing, specialist accommodation and accessible homes will be equally important in ensuring that future housing supply responds effectively to local needs.

Implications for the Housing Strategy

The evidence demonstrates that housing need within Blaby is becoming both more acute and more complex. Population ageing, rising disability levels, smaller household sizes and increasing affordability pressures are reshaping the district's housing requirements. At the same time, the structure of the local housing market, characterised by high owner occupation, limited social housing and restricted housing mobility, is creating additional pressures for households seeking suitable accommodation.

The key challenge for the Housing Strategy is therefore not simply to increase housing supply but to **ensure that the housing system is better aligned with the needs of local communities.** This will require increasing the supply of affordable housing, particularly social rent; rebalancing the housing mix towards smaller homes whilst retaining sufficient family housing; improving accessibility and adaptability across all tenures; supporting housing mobility and downsizing opportunities; and increasing provision of specialist and supported accommodation. Greater integration between housing, health and social care services will also be required to meet the needs of an ageing population and residents with complex support requirements.

Overall, the evidence points to a need for the Housing Strategy to move beyond a traditional focus on housing numbers and **concentrate on delivering the right homes, in the right locations, for the right people.** Demographic ageing, affordability pressures, health inequalities and increasing complexity of housing need will require a coordinated, partnership-based approach. The strategy should therefore prioritise affordable and accessible housing, support independent living, strengthen homelessness prevention, improve housing mobility, align housing and economic growth, and ensure that future development contributes to sustainable, healthy and inclusive communities across Blaby. By acting as a system leader and working alongside developers, registered providers, health partners and community organisations, the Council can ensure that future housing growth supports both economic prosperity and improved quality of life for residents throughout the district.



Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness remains one of the most significant housing challenges facing Blaby District. Although homelessness is often considered in terms of people sleeping rough or living in temporary accommodation, the reality is much broader and includes households threatened with homelessness, people living in unsuitable or overcrowded housing, hidden homelessness such as sofa surfing, and households whose housing circumstances are insecure or unsustainable. Preventing homelessness before a crisis occurs remains the most effective approach, both in terms of improving outcomes for residents and reducing pressure on public services. This principle underpins both national policy and Blaby District Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–2030.

The last five years have been particularly challenging for homelessness services. Nationally, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising rents, higher mortgage costs, slowing housebuilding rates and increasing pressure on health and social care systems have all contributed to growing housing insecurity. These factors have combined with long-standing shortages of affordable housing to create increasing pressure across the housing system. The **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** identifies that demand for homelessness services has increased significantly over the lifetime of the previous strategy, with almost 4,800 approaches made to the Housing Service and increasing numbers of households requiring advice, assistance and statutory interventions.

The district has experienced rising levels of homelessness despite significant investment in prevention activity. The evidence suggests that **affordability has become an increasingly important driver of homelessness.** Households are facing a combination of rising private rents, limited social housing availability, increasing living costs and reduced opportunities to access home ownership. As housing options become more constrained, more residents are turning to homelessness services when accommodation becomes unaffordable or unavailable. The Homelessness Strategy highlights that the ending of private rented tenancies has now become the single most common cause of homelessness presentations in the district, overtaking the historically dominant cause of family and friends no longer being willing to accommodate. Domestic abuse also remains a significant and growing cause of homelessness, whilst tenancy sustainment within social housing has become an increasingly important area of intervention.

Housing need data demonstrates that homelessness represents only the most visible part of a much wider challenge. The Housing Needs Assessment estimates that **approximately** 1,960 households **across the district are living in unsuitable housing circumstances.** This includes 365 concealed or homeless households, 695 households living in overcrowded accommodation, 78 existing affordable housing tenants living in unsuitable homes, and 822 households living in unsuitable housing within other tenures. Much of this need is concentrated within the Principal Urban Area and larger settlements, although evidence demonstrates housing pressures across all parts of the district. These figures highlight the extent of hidden homelessness and unmet housing need that exists alongside statutory homelessness presentations.

One of the most visible consequences of increasing homelessness pressures has been the growing reliance on temporary accommodation. As households wait longer to access suitable permanent housing, the average length of stay in temporary accommodation has doubled from 11 weeks in 2020 to 22 weeks in 2024. This has created significant financial pressures for the Council, with expenditure on temporary accommodation increasing from approximately £155,000 in 2020/21 to more than £652,000 in 2024/25. Longer stays also increase the need for self-contained accommodation, particularly for families with children, further increasing costs and reducing flexibility within the system. Future proposals to apply higher quality standards to temporary accommodation are likely to place additional pressure on resources while also improving outcomes for residents.

Despite these challenges, homelessness prevention activity has delivered significant positive outcomes. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24, Blaby District Council successfully prevented or relieved homelessness for 1,131 households, averaging around 280 households each year, with a peak of 311 households in 2023/24. This has been achieved through a combination of tenancy sustainment work, negotiation with landlords and Registered Providers, mediation with families, financial support, income maximisation, access to alternative accommodation and coordinated support for vulnerable households. The Council's tenancy sustainment approach has been particularly important in reducing evictions from social housing through early intervention around rent arrears and tenancy difficulties.

The evidence also highlights that **homelessness is increasingly linked to multiple and complex support needs.** Many households approaching the service require more than housing assistance alone and may have needs relating to mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical health conditions, care and support needs or wider social disadvantage. Housing instability can both contribute to and result from these challenges. The Homelessness Strategy identifies a growing need for specialist interventions, supported housing and coordinated multi-agency responses to ensure that vulnerable households can sustain accommodation and avoid repeat homelessness.

In response, the Council and its partners have invested in a range of specialist housing solutions. Recent initiatives include the delivery of supported housing schemes such as Henson House and Frost Court, the development of Housing First accommodation for rough sleepers and former rough sleepers, and the acquisition of Council-owned temporary accommodation through the Local Authority Housing Fund. These developments have strengthened the local housing pathway by providing accommodation options for people who would not be able to sustain general needs housing without additional support. They also demonstrate the increasing importance of supported and transitional accommodation within the wider housing system.

Blaby also recognises that where temporary accommodation is required this should be of a high standard. Building upon the work that has been done under the last Housing Strategy there will continue to be an improvement in the temporary accommodation offer. At the same time the aim is that reliance on the use of temporary accommodation will diminish. To support this aim two full time homelessness prevention posts have been created and recruited to in 2026. This has been made possible by utilising some of the leaders £0.5m budget pledge for homelessness prevention.

While **rough sleeping remains relatively limited within Blaby** compared to many urban authorities, preventing rough sleeping and repeat rough sleeping remains a strategic priority. Partnership work through the Rough Sleeper Initiative, Housing First programmes and outreach services has helped ensure that rough sleepers receive accommodation and wrap-around support at the earliest opportunity. The focus has increasingly shifted from crisis response towards prevention and sustainable long-term housing outcomes. Blaby has successfully bid for funding via the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant and received £441,192 In funding. This has enabled a rough sleeping initiative to be established, working in partnership with emh group, that is based on the Housing First model. In addition, the Leader of the Council has pledged £0.5m in funding for homelessness prevention.

A recurring theme throughout the evidence is the importance of partnership working. Effective homelessness prevention relies upon close collaboration between housing services, Registered Providers, health services, adult and children's social care, probation services, domestic abuse organisations, voluntary sector agencies and neighbouring local authorities. The Council has developed a range of partnership arrangements, including care leaver protocols, prison release pathways, domestic abuse initiatives and rough sleeping partnerships, recognising that housing outcomes are often dependent upon wider support systems being in place.

The evidence demonstrates that **homelessness is both a housing issue and a wider social challenge.** Rising affordability pressures, shortages of affordable housing, increasing temporary accommodation costs, growing levels of hidden homelessness and increasing numbers of households with complex support needs are creating sustained pressure across the system. Prevention must therefore remain the cornerstone of the Council's approach.

The Housing Strategy should prioritise early intervention and tenancy sustainment, increase the supply of affordable housing and move-on accommodation, support the delivery of specialist and supported housing, reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and strengthen partnership approaches for vulnerable households. Continued investment in homelessness prevention services, domestic abuse support, tenancy sustainment and Housing First approaches will also be essential. By focusing on prevention, resilience and independence, the Council can help reduce homelessness, prevent rough sleeping, improve housing stability and achieve better long-term outcomes for residents across Blaby District. In addition a Homelessness Action Plan has been developed to deliver on the National Plan to end Homelessness.

Specialist and Supported Housing

Specialist and supported housing is essential to enabling residents with care, support or accessibility needs to live safely, independently and with dignity. It also plays a key role in preventing homelessness, supporting hospital discharge, reducing pressure on health and social care services, and helping people move on from crisis into stable accommodation.

Blaby's housing evidence shows that demand for specialist and supported housing will increase over the life of this Strategy. The district has an ageing population, increasing levels of disability and mobility need, and a growing requirement for housing that can support people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, domestic abuse, homelessness, substance misuse, care experience and multiple disadvantages. This means that the Council must plan not only for more homes, but for the right homes, in the right locations, with the right level of support.

Blaby is actively working with other councils in Leicestershire to develop a joint Supported Housing Strategy. This will be a key document that will guide specialist and supported housing provision in the future.

Older Persons' Housing

The Housing Needs Assessment and wider Housing Market Area evidence demonstrate that demographic ageing will be one of the most significant factors influencing housing demand over the lifetime of this Strategy and beyond. Blaby's population has grown significantly over recent decades, but the most notable future trend will be the continuing growth in the number of older residents, particularly those aged over 65 and over 85. These age groups are expected to account for a substantial proportion of future population growth, creating new and increasingly complex demands on the housing system.

The implications extend beyond simply providing more homes for older people. Future demand is likely to include a need for accessible and adaptable housing, specialist accommodation, extra care housing, housing with support, and homes that enable residents to remain independent for longer. The evidence also highlights growing numbers of residents living with long-term health conditions, reduced mobility, dementia and other age-related illnesses. As a result, housing must be planned as part of a wider health and wellbeing system, supporting prevention, independence and reduced reliance on health and social care services.

The evidence suggests that accessibility should become a mainstream housing consideration rather than being viewed solely as a specialist issue. New housing should increasingly incorporate inclusive design principles, adaptable layouts and accessibility standards that enable residents to remain in their homes as their needs change over time. This approach not only supports older people but also benefits families, disabled residents and those experiencing temporary illness or injury.

Alongside specialist provision, there is a need to improve housing mobility within the District. The evidence identifies significant levels of under-occupation across the housing market, with many older households continuing to occupy larger family homes after children have moved away. While many residents wish to remain within their communities, there are often limited local alternatives that offer attractive, accessible and energy-efficient accommodation. Increasing the availability of bungalows, retirement housing, extra care accommodation and smaller accessible homes could help older residents remain independent whilst also releasing larger family housing back into the wider housing market. This would deliver benefits both for older households and for younger families struggling to access suitable accommodation.

The Council will therefore work with Registered Providers, developers, health partners, care commissioners and neighbouring authorities to ensure that future housing provision reflects the needs and aspirations of an ageing population. This will include supporting a wider range of housing choices for later life, improving accessibility within mainstream housing, promoting specialist accommodation where required and ensuring that new development contributes to the creation of age-friendly communities.



Supported Housing and Care

Supported housing plays a vital role within the wider housing system by providing accommodation alongside the support required for residents to live safely, independently and successfully within their communities. It supports homelessness prevention, hospital discharge, recovery from crisis, tenancy sustainment and progression towards independent living. As housing needs become increasingly complex, supported housing will play an increasingly important role in ensuring that vulnerable residents can access appropriate accommodation and support.

Evidence from both the Housing Needs Assessment and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy demonstrates growing demand amongst a range of groups including residents with mental health needs, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, care leavers, domestic abuse survivors, individuals experiencing homelessness and those facing multiple disadvantage. Many of these households require more than housing alone and benefit from coordinated services that integrate accommodation with health, social care and support provision.

Recent investment in schemes such as Henson House and Frost Court has demonstrated the positive outcomes that can be achieved through partnership working. These developments, together with Local Authority Housing Fund acquisitions, Housing First initiatives and homelessness prevention programmes, have strengthened local housing pathways and reduced reliance on unsuitable accommodation. However, demographic change, affordability pressures and increasing complexity of need suggest that demand for supported housing will continue to increase over the life of this Strategy.

The Council recognises that the future focus must be on both the quantity and quality of supported housing provision. Emerging regulatory reforms and the **Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act** place greater emphasis on governance, safeguarding, resident outcomes, support quality and value for money. The Council will work closely with providers, commissioners and regulatory bodies to ensure that accommodation is safe, well-managed and capable of delivering positive outcomes for residents.

A particular priority will be strengthening housing pathways into, through and out of supported accommodation. Supported housing should provide a foundation for independence wherever possible, enabling residents to develop the skills and confidence necessary to move into settled housing when ready. Improving move-on opportunities will also help ensure that supported housing resources are used effectively and remain available for those who need them most. The Council will therefore work with Registered Providers, support agencies, health partners and Leicestershire County Council to identify gaps in provision, improve strategic planning and coordinate future investment in specialist housing services.

Housing for People with Disabilities

Disability is becoming an increasingly important housing consideration within Blaby District. Approximately 16% of residents are disabled and around 30% of households contain at least one person with a disability, with prevalence increasing significantly amongst older age groups. Future demographic projections indicate further growth in disability, mobility impairment, long-term health conditions and dementia, reinforcing the need to ensure that housing provision responds effectively to changing needs.

Accessible and adaptable housing is therefore a fundamental component of future housing delivery. The Council supports the implementation of accessibility standards through both planning and strategic housing functions, recognising that housing which enables people to live independently has significant benefits for residents, health services and wider public services. The Local Plan's requirement for accessible and adaptable homes, together with wheelchair-user housing provision, reflects the importance of embedding accessibility into mainstream housing delivery.

Adaptations and practical support also remain essential. Through initiatives such as Disabled Facilities Grants, the Lightbulb Project and the Hospital Enablement Team, the Council and its partners help residents remain within their own homes, prevent avoidable hospital admissions, support timely hospital discharge and reduce the need for more intensive care interventions. Evidence demonstrates that housing adaptations can significantly improve health outcomes, increase independence and reduce pressure on health and social care services.

The Council will continue to support investment in accessible and adaptable housing, specialist accommodation, home adaptations and assistive technologies. Housing services will work alongside health and social care partners to develop a coordinated approach that recognises housing as a key enabler of independence, wellbeing and quality of life. By embedding accessibility throughout the housing system, the Council will help ensure that residents can remain active, independent and connected to their communities regardless of age or disability.

Domestic abuse and vulnerable groups

Domestic abuse remains a significant cause of housing need and homelessness. BDC has utilised UKSPF funding to commission a Domestic Abuse Link Worker. This has enabled all DA cases that come through to the Homelessness Team to be offered dedicated and specialised DA support quickly. On average the Link Worker has a case load of 31 open cases and receives an average of 19 new referrals per quarter.

The Council will work with partners to ensure that survivors can access safe accommodation, trauma-informed support and clear move-on routes into settled housing. This will include links with homelessness services, community safety, specialist domestic abuse services, registered providers and countywide commissioning arrangements.

The Council also recognises that some residents face multiple and overlapping barriers to housing, including poor mental health, substance misuse, offending history, care experience, financial exclusion, family breakdown and rough sleeping. A coordinated housing pathway is needed so that residents receive timely advice, appropriate accommodation and support that helps them sustain tenancies and avoid repeat homelessness.

Summary

The need for specialist and supported housing is expected to become increasingly important during the life of this Strategy. National policy, demographic change and the increasing complexity of housing need all point towards a greater requirement for accommodation that combines housing with appropriate levels of support. This is particularly relevant for people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, people at risk of homelessness, care leavers, domestic abuse survivors and residents experiencing multiple disadvantage.

The Council recognises that the quality of supported housing is as important as the quantity provided. Emerging regulatory reforms are placing greater emphasis on governance, safeguarding, support standards, resident outcomes and value for money. The Council will therefore work with providers and commissioning partners to ensure that supported housing schemes deliver positive outcomes, promote independence and provide safe, high-quality accommodation. Housing pathways should support residents to move successfully into settled accommodation wherever appropriate, ensuring that supported housing remains an effective part of a wider housing system rather than a long-term destination for residents who wish to achieve greater independence.

Strategic Priorities

- Develop a clear evidence base for specialist and supported housing need, including older people, people with disabilities, people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, care leavers, domestic abuse survivors and people experiencing homelessness.
- Work with partners to plan and deliver additional specialist, supported and accessible housing where gaps are identified.
- Strengthen pathways into supported housing and improve move-on options so that accommodation is used effectively and residents can progress towards independence.
- Promote accessible and adaptable housing through planning, partnership working and investment in adaptations.
- Improve quality, safeguarding and oversight of supported housing provision, including preparation for new national regulatory requirements.

Progress will be monitored through the delivery plan for this Strategy and through partnership governance arrangements. Measures may include the number of new specialist or supported homes delivered, the number of homes adapted, reductions in delayed hospital discharge linked to housing, improved move-on from supported accommodation, reduced repeat homelessness and evidence of improved resident outcomes.

Housing Quality, Safety and Standards

Good-quality housing is fundamental to health, wellbeing, safety and quality of life. Poor housing conditions can contribute to ill health, fuel poverty, accidents, social isolation and wider inequalities. This Strategy therefore places a clear emphasis on ensuring that homes across all tenures are safe, warm, secure, well maintained and suitable for the needs of residents.

The Council has an important role in improving housing standards through regulation, enforcement, advice, partnership working and strategic leadership. This includes working with private landlords, letting agents, registered providers, owner occupiers, developers and residents to prevent poor conditions, tackle hazards and promote compliance with current and emerging housing standards.

The **Housing Health and Safety Rating System** remains the main risk-based framework used by local authorities to assess hazards in residential accommodation. It enables the Council to identify risks to health and safety and take proportionate enforcement action where homes contain serious hazards. The 2026 update to the HHSRS strengthens the importance of clear, consistent and evidence-based assessment of risks within homes.

The Council will use its statutory powers under the **Housing Act 2004** and related legislation to address serious hazards, while also using advice, guidance and informal resolution where this is appropriate and effective. Enforcement activity will be targeted according to risk, with priority given to conditions that present the greatest threat to residents, including excess cold, damp and mould, fire risks, falls, electrical hazards, poor sanitation, overcrowding and unsafe property management.

National policy is placing **greater emphasis on decency, safety and tenant protection across rented housing.** The new Decent Homes Standard is expected to apply to both social and private rented homes, setting clearer expectations around serious hazards, repair, facilities, thermal comfort and damp and mould via Awaab's Law, creates an important opportunity to raise standards consistently across tenures and reduce inequalities between residents living in different parts of the housing market.

Damp, mould and excess cold can have significant impacts on physical and mental health, particularly for children, older people and residents with respiratory conditions, disabilities or long-term illnesses. The Council will take a proactive approach to identifying and addressing these issues, ensuring that residents are supported to report concerns and that landlords respond quickly and effectively.

Improving thermal comfort will also support wider objectives around fuel poverty, health inequalities and carbon reduction. The Council will work with partners to promote energy efficiency improvements, access available funding and ensure that residents are signposted to advice and support where homes are cold, inefficient or costly to heat.

Residents must be able to feel safe in their homes and in shared residential environments. The Council will work with landlords, registered providers, fire and rescue services and other partners to promote compliance with building safety, fire safety and property management requirements, including in houses in multiple occupation, flats, temporary accommodation and supported housing.

This includes ensuring that higher-risk housing is appropriately identified, that landlords understand their responsibilities, and that concerns relating to fire safety, overcrowding, poor management or unsafe communal areas are investigated and addressed. The Council will use intelligence from complaints, inspections, partner referrals and local data to target activity where risk is greatest.

The strategic priorities will be to:

- Improve the quality, safety and condition of homes across all tenures, with a focus on residents most at risk from poor housing conditions.
- Use HHSRS and wider statutory powers to identify and address serious housing hazards through proportionate and risk-based enforcement.
- Prepare for implementation of the new Decent Homes Standard and ensure local approaches reflect emerging requirements for social and private rented housing.
- Tackle damp, mould, excess cold and poor energy efficiency through enforcement, partnership working, advice and access to improvement funding.
- Strengthen engagement with private landlords, letting agents and registered providers to promote compliance, good practice and early resolution of issues.
- Use data, resident feedback and partner intelligence to target resources at the homes, landlords and neighbourhoods where risks are greatest.

The Council will prepare for these changes by strengthening local intelligence on housing conditions, working with landlords and registered providers to support compliance, and ensuring that enforcement and engagement approaches are aligned with the new national framework. This will include consideration of how the standard applies to temporary accommodation, supported housing and other forms of accommodation used by vulnerable households.

Progress will be monitored through the Strategy delivery plan and relevant service performance measures. Indicators may include the number of housing standard complaints investigated, hazards resolved, enforcement actions taken, landlord engagement activities delivered, homes improved through energy efficiency or adaptation programmes, and evidence of improved outcomes for residents living in poor-quality housing.



Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector (PRS) plays an increasingly important role within Blaby's housing market. Although smaller than the national average, accounting for around 13% of households, it has been the fastest growing tenure over the last decade, increasing by more than 30% between 2011 and 2021. These figures mask the challenges that are being experienced in the sector and the increasing number of landlords that have left the sector due to the tax implications and the Renters Reform Act. The sector now accommodates a diverse range of residents, including working households, families, lower-income households, vulnerable residents and people unable to access either home ownership or social housing. It has therefore become a mainstream component of the local housing system rather than simply a temporary housing option.

Blaby District Council's PRS market is becoming a market for residents unable to buy their own home. This has further knock on impacts as private sector rents for 2 bed houses rose 19.2% from 2018/19 to 2022/23.Over a similar period first time buyer prices for 2 beds increased by 26.2%. First time buyer sales rates fell by 16% suggesting that fewer renters can leave the PRS and move into ownership. Consequently, demand for the PRS is increasing and the provision of housing in the PRS has not increased sufficiently to meet demand. Rent levels are also a barrier to using the PRS to address homelessness as the rents are unaffordable. This is exacerbated by the Local Housing Allowance not keeping pace with rent levels. This in turn means that those on benefits may struggle to make rental payments.

The growth of the PRS therefore reflects wider affordability pressures within the housing market. As house prices and rents have increased, many households have found it increasingly difficult to access home ownership, while limited availability of social housing has further increased reliance on privately rented accommodation. More than 1,800 tenants in Blaby receive Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, highlighting the important role the sector plays in preventing homelessness and accommodating households with limited housing choices.

However, **the sector faces significant affordability challenges.** Private rents have increased substantially over the last decade and, while remaining below national averages, have grown faster than many household incomes. As a result, an increasing number of residents find themselves dependent on private renting for longer periods, often spending a significant proportion of their income on housing and facing limited opportunities to save for home ownership. This creates a growing group of households who are neither able to buy nor likely to access social housing in the short term.

The evidence also demonstrates the importance of the PRS for families and children. More than 40% of private rented households contain dependent children and many rented properties are family-sized homes. At the same time, overcrowding is more common within the sector than in owner occupation and has increased over recent years, reflecting both affordability pressures and longer lengths of stay. These issues are particularly relevant for some ethnic minority households and lower-income families, emphasising the need to ensure the sector continues to provide suitable and affordable family accommodation.

Housing quality remains another important consideration. Private rented homes are more likely than other tenures to contain non-decent housing and serious hazards, with around one-fifth of properties estimated to fall below the Decent Homes Standard. While conditions are generally better than national averages, maintaining and improving standards will be increasingly important as the sector continues to house families, vulnerable households and residents receiving housing support. The Council will therefore need to balance enforcement, landlord engagement, tenant support and energy efficiency improvements to ensure good-quality accommodation is available across the sector.

The future of the private rented sector is also being shaped by significant regulatory change. Reforms introduced through the Renters' Rights legislation, alongside Awaab's Law, updated Decent Homes Standards and higher energy efficiency requirements, are expected to improve tenant security and housing quality. These changes should help reduce homelessness arising from no-fault evictions and improve living conditions for tenants. However, there is also concern that increasing regulation, rising costs and changing market conditions may encourage some landlords to leave the sector, potentially reducing supply and placing additional pressure on rents and housing services.

The evidence suggests that **the private rented sector will remain an essential part of Blaby's housing offer for the foreseeable future.** While increasing the supply of affordable and social rented housing should remain the long-term priority, the PRS will continue to accommodate many households who cannot access other tenures. The Housing Strategy should therefore support a balanced approach that promotes high housing standards, affordability, energy efficiency and tenant security, whilst maintaining a healthy supply of privately rented homes. Continued engagement with landlords, agents and tenants, alongside ongoing monitoring of rents, housing quality and market trends, will be important in ensuring that the sector continues to make a positive contribution to meeting housing needs across the District.

However, despite the sector growing since the previous ONS Survey period, Blaby District Council's PRS market is becoming an increasingly captive market for residents unable to purchase their own home. Using 2 bedroom as the most needed house type within Blaby as a measure, private sector rents rose **19.2%** from 2018/19 to 2022/23. Over a similar period (2019 to 2025) first-time buyer price increased **26.2%**. As a result, first-time buyer mortgage sales rates fell **16%** between 2017 and 2024, the fact the majority of first-time buyers do so from the PRS sector, this suggests fewer renters can leave the PRS and move into ownership. This creates sustained rental demand from households who are priced out of buying, while ONS evidence indicates housing stock has increased, it has not increased enough to ease this pressure.

The result is a constrained market where limited exit routes from renting and insufficient supply contribute to rising rental prices. This has a direct knock-on effect on options for Housing Officers seeking to discharge our Homelessness duty into the private rented sector. It's simply too expensive for many of our residents in insecure housing and hence the only option is to seek accommodation in an already over stretched social housing sector.

Lastly as the increase in demand and price has occurred in the PRS the Local Housing Allowance rate has not (despite being increased in 2024) kept pace. To illustrate this the gap between market rent for a 2 bed property in 2021/22 was £85, by 2025/25 this had risen to £314. This has led to increasing affordability issues for many residents relying on benefits, who are not being able to meet rental or income requirements to maintain a tenancy.

Climate Change and Housing

Housing has a critical role to play in achieving the Council's wider climate, health and affordability objectives. In line with the Climate Change Strategy, the Council will pursue a dual approach of climate change mitigation and adaptation, reducing carbon emissions from homes whilst ensuring that housing is resilient to the impacts of climate change, including overheating, flooding and extreme weather events. Housing policy will align with evolving national standards, funding programmes and regulatory requirements to support the transition to a low-carbon housing system.

A key priority is improving the energy performance of existing homes, recognising that most of the housing stock that will exist in 2030 has already been built. The Council will support efforts to achieve EPC C or equivalent across all tenures by 2030, with a particular focus on the least energy-efficient homes, households experiencing fuel poverty and hard-to-treat properties. Delivery will be based on a fabric-first approach, prioritising measures such as insulation, airtightness and ventilation before the installation of low-carbon heating systems. This work will be supported through national retrofit and decarbonisation programmes, including the Warm Homes Plan and associated funding streams.

The private rented sector will play an important role in achieving these ambitions. The Council will support landlords in preparing for future regulatory changes, including the requirement for privately rented homes to achieve EPC C or equivalent by 2030, while continuing to enforce existing Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. Alongside this, the Council will work with Registered Providers to support large-scale investment in social housing retrofit, helping to meet emerging EPC requirements and improve energy efficiency across affordable housing stock. Improving the quality and energy performance of existing homes will not only reduce carbon emissions but also help tackle fuel poverty, improve health outcomes and strengthen the long-term sustainability of housing assets.

The Council also recognises the **importance of ensuring that new homes contribute to climate objectives.** New residential development will be expected to align with the Future Homes Standard, delivering substantially lower carbon emissions through improved building fabric, low-carbon heating systems and more energy-efficient construction. Where feasible, the Council will support the delivery of higher standards, including net-zero operational carbon homes, renewable energy generation and innovative design approaches that further reduce energy demand and environmental impact.

Housing growth must also contribute to the creation of sustainable and climate-resilient communities. This includes ensuring that homes are located in places with good access to services, employment opportunities and sustainable transport, while incorporating high-quality green infrastructure, biodiversity improvements and measures to address overheating, water efficiency and flood risk. Through housing, planning and investment decisions, the Council will seek to embed climate considerations across all aspects of delivery.

The evidence demonstrates that **reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and increasing climate resilience are now core housing priorities.** The Housing Strategy should therefore promote a programme of retrofit and decarbonisation across existing homes, support residents and landlords to improve energy performance, and ensure that all new development contributes to a low-carbon future. By aligning housing delivery with climate objectives, the Council can simultaneously address fuel poverty, improve health and wellbeing, reduce environmental impacts and create more sustainable and resilient communities across Blaby.
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Strategic Priorities

The evidence presented throughout this Strategy demonstrates that Blaby District faces a range of interconnected housing challenges that will shape housing demand and service delivery over the coming years. Population growth, an ageing population, affordability pressures, rising homelessness, changing household structures, increasing demand for specialist and supported housing, and the transition to a low-carbon future all require a coordinated and long-term response. At the same time, housing plays a fundamental role in supporting wider priorities relating to health, wellbeing, economic growth, social inclusion and community resilience.

The evidence also highlights that the District's housing challenges are becoming increasingly complex. The need is not simply for more homes, but for the right homes in the right places, supported by effective services and strong partnerships. Success will depend upon the Council's ability to work collaboratively with residents, Registered Providers, developers, health and care partners, voluntary organisations and government agencies to shape a housing system that responds to both current and future needs.

As a strategic housing authority, the Council's role extends beyond its statutory housing functions. The Council has a key role as a place-shaper, facilitator, enabler and community leader, ensuring that housing contributes positively to wider corporate objectives and the creation of thriving, healthy and sustainable communities. The following strategic priorities bring together the evidence and themes identified throughout this Strategy and provide the framework for delivery between 2026 and 2031.

Delivery of all priorities will be underpinned by strong partnership working, resident engagement, evidence-led decision making and effective use of resources. The Council will work collaboratively with residents, Registered Providers, developers, health and care partners, voluntary and community organisations, Homes England and neighbouring authorities to maximise outcomes, align investment and respond effectively to changing housing needs and policy requirements.



Strategic Priority 1: Increase the Supply of Homes that Meet Local Needs

The evidence demonstrates that housing need within Blaby is changing significantly. Population growth is increasingly driven by older age groups, household sizes are becoming smaller, and demand is increasing for accessible, adaptable and specialist accommodation. At the same time, affordability pressures continue to limit housing choice for many residents. The Council must therefore focus not only on increasing housing supply, but on ensuring that new homes reflect the needs of local communities. This includes delivering an appropriate mix of tenures, sizes and types of accommodation, including family housing, affordable housing, specialist provision and homes designed to support independent living throughout different stages of life. By ensuring that growth is aligned with identified need, the Council can support sustainable communities and improve housing outcomes for existing and future residents. "Evidence demonstrates that affordability remains the most significant housing challenge facing the District and that genuinely affordable rented housing, particularly social rent, will be critical in meeting identified housing need and reducing homelessness pressures.

We will:

- Increase the supply of affordable and social rented housing.
- Promote a balanced mix of housing sizes, types and tenures.
- Support delivery of accessible, adaptable and specialist housing.
- Support better use of existing housing stock through downsizing opportunities, housing mobility and tenure flexibility.
- Work with partners to maximise housing delivery through planning and investment opportunities.

Strategic Priority 2: Prevent Homelessness and Promote Housing Stability

Homelessness pressures have increased both nationally and locally, reflecting affordability challenges, limited housing supply and increasingly complex support needs. While the Council has achieved positive outcomes through prevention activities and partnership working, demand for homelessness services and temporary accommodation continues to grow. Preventing homelessness before crisis occurs remains the most effective approach for both residents and public services. This priority focuses on strengthening prevention activity, supporting tenancy sustainment, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and improving access to settled housing. Through a combination of early intervention, housing advice and partnership working, the Council will seek to ensure that fewer households experience homelessness and that those who do can access timely and appropriate support.

We will:

- Strengthen homelessness prevention and early intervention services.
- Reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.
- Improve access to settled housing and move-on opportunities.
- Support residents to sustain their homes and prevent repeat homelessness.
- Strengthen housing pathways and specialist support for residents with complex needs, including domestic abuse survivors, care leavers, people with mental health needs and those at risk of rough sleeping.

Strategic Priority 3: Support Health, Independence and Inclusive Communities

Good housing is fundamental to health, wellbeing and independence. The evidence highlights growing demand for specialist and supported housing, driven by an ageing population, increasing levels of disability and rising numbers of residents with complex support needs. There is also a growing recognition of the important role housing plays in reducing health inequalities, supporting timely hospital discharge and enabling residents to live independently for longer. The Council will therefore work closely with health, social care and community partners to ensure that housing provision and support services are integrated and responsive to need. The aim is to create communities where residents can access suitable accommodation and the support required to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

We will:

- Support delivery of specialist and supported housing.
- Promote accessible and adaptable homes.
- Support independent living through adaptations and housing-related support.
- Strengthen links between housing, health and social care services.
- Support initiatives that reduce health inequalities, facilitate hospital discharge and help residents remain independent for longer.

Strategic Priority 4: Improve Housing Quality, Safety and Standards

Everyone should be able to live in a home that is safe, warm, secure and well maintained. National reforms have significantly increased expectations around housing quality, tenant safety and landlord accountability. Although many homes in the District are of a good standard, poor housing conditions continue to affect some residents and can have serious impacts on health and wellbeing. The Council will continue to use its regulatory and strategic powers to tackle poor housing conditions, improve standards across all tenures and support compliance with emerging regulatory requirements. Particular emphasis will be placed on addressing hazards such as damp, mould, excess cold and poor management practices, while promoting high standards throughout the housing sector.

We will:

- Improve housing quality across all tenures.
- Tackle poor conditions, damp, mould and housing hazards.
- Support compliance with emerging housing standards and legislation.
- Work proactively with landlords, letting agents and Registered Providers to drive improvement across all tenures.

Strategic Priority 5: Deliver Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Homes and Communities

Housing has a critical role to play in addressing climate change and supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. Improving the energy performance of existing homes can reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty and improve residents' health and wellbeing, while ensuring that new development contributes positively to environmental sustainability. At the same time, homes and communities must be designed to adapt to the future impacts of climate change, including overheating, flooding and extreme weather events. Through partnership working, investment and effective planning, the Council will support the creation of sustainable, energy-efficient and climate-resilient homes and neighbourhoods that benefit both current and future generations.

We will:

- Improve the energy efficiency of existing homes.
- Support delivery of sustainable and low-carbon new housing.
- Reduce fuel poverty and improve thermal comfort.
- Ensure homes and communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including overheating, flooding and extreme weather.
- Promote climate resilience and sustainable placemaking principles.

Together, these priorities provide a framework for a housing system that not only responds to immediate pressures but also anticipates future challenges and opportunities. Through partnership working, innovation and a strong focus on delivery, the Council will seek to ensure that everyone in Blaby District has access to a safe, suitable, affordable and sustainable home, supporting healthier lives, stronger communities and a more resilient future for the District.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Council is committed to ensuring that everyone has fair access to safe, secure, affordable and suitable housing regardless of age, disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, or marital status. Housing inequalities can have a profound impact on health, wellbeing, financial stability and life opportunities, meaning that equality considerations must be embedded throughout the implementation of this Strategy.

The evidence underpinning the Strategy demonstrates that some groups experience disproportionate housing challenges. Older people increasingly require accessible and adaptable homes that support independent living. Disabled residents often require adaptations, specialist accommodation and integrated support services. Ethnic minority communities may experience affordability pressures, overcrowding and barriers to accessing suitable housing. Women can be disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and housing insecurity, while younger people often face significant affordability challenges when attempting to access independent housing. The Strategy therefore seeks to reduce inequalities by improving access to affordable housing, supporting independent living, preventing homelessness and improving housing quality across all tenures.

Inclusive design principles will also play an important role in shaping future housing delivery. The Council will encourage the development of homes and neighbourhoods that can be accessed and used by the widest possible range of residents, including older people, disabled people and families with changing needs. Accessible and adaptable housing standards, wheelchair-user accommodation, age-friendly design and the creation of inclusive public spaces will all contribute to stronger and more resilient communities.

The Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix A), undertaken alongside this Strategy concludes that overall impacts are expected to be strongly positive, particularly for older people, disabled residents, people experiencing homelessness, low-income households and residents requiring specialist housing and support services. The Council will continue to monitor outcomes throughout the life of the Strategy to ensure that housing services remain inclusive, responsive and capable of addressing emerging inequalities.

Governance and Partnerships

Successful delivery of the Housing Strategy will depend on strong governance, effective partnership working and a whole-system approach to housing. Housing outcomes are influenced by a wide range of interconnected issues, including health, economic growth, planning, social care and community wellbeing, meaning that the Council cannot deliver the Strategy in isolation. The period covered by the Strategy also coincides with significant changes to public sector governance, including local government reorganisation, changes to health structures and wider public service reform. These developments are likely to influence how housing services are delivered in the future and require a flexible and adaptable approach.

Blaby District Council will provide strategic leadership through established governance arrangements, with overall accountability resting with elected Members and Cabinet. Senior leadership teams will oversee delivery, ensuring that resources are aligned with priorities, risks are effectively managed and progress is monitored. Day-to-day implementation will be led by housing, environmental health and regulatory services, supported by clear performance management arrangements, delivery planning and periodic review to ensure that the Strategy remains responsive to changing needs and legislative requirements.

A whole-Council approach will be essential to delivery. Planning services will help secure the supply of new homes and sustainable communities; Environmental Health will support housing standards and enforcement activity; Public Health and Community Services will contribute to tackling inequalities and supporting vulnerable residents; Economic Development will help align housing and employment growth; and Revenues and Benefits services will assist households experiencing financial pressures. Integrating housing objectives across Council services will ensure that housing contributes to wider corporate priorities and community outcomes.

Partnership working will be equally important. Registered Providers will be key to delivering affordable housing and improving housing quality; private landlords and letting agents will play an important role in raising standards within the private rented sector; health partners will support activity linking housing and wellbeing; and Leicestershire County Council, neighbouring authorities and the voluntary and community sector will help deliver coordinated responses to homelessness, support needs and housing vulnerability. Developers and private sector partners will also play a significant role in delivering new homes, infrastructure and sustainable communities. Existing structures, including the Strategic Housing Partnership, provide an important mechanism for collaboration and shared delivery.

The Council will also act as a strategic leader and enabler across the wider housing system, ensuring housing contributes to economic growth, health improvement, environmental objectives and community resilience. This role will become increasingly important as the Council responds to new legislative requirements, including Awaab's Law, reforms to the private rented sector and wider housing regulation changes. Resident engagement will remain central to delivery, ensuring that housing services are informed by lived experience and remain responsive to the needs of local communities. Through strong governance, effective partnerships and continued engagement, the Council will ensure that housing plays a central role in creating safe, healthy and sustainable communities across Blaby.

Through robust monitoring, continuous improvement and active engagement with residents and stakeholders, the Council will ensure that housing contributes to safe, healthy and sustainable communities across the District.

Funding and Investment Sources

The Council recognises that delivery of the Housing Strategy will require significant investment over a number of years and that no single funding source will be sufficient to meet identified housing needs. Achieving the ambitions contained within this Strategy will therefore require a combination of Government funding, Registered Provider investment, developer contributions, private sector investment, partnership funding and the effective use of existing public resources. A key role of the Council will be to act as a facilitator and strategic partner, helping to secure investment and ensure resources are directed towards areas of greatest need. The Council will continuously monitor emerging funding opportunities and respond proactively to changes in national housing policy and investment programmes.

Affordable Housing Delivery Funding

The delivery of affordable and social rented housing will remain a priority throughout the life of this Strategy. Investment is expected to come from a number of sources, including Homes England funding programmes, Registered Provider borrowing and investment, local authority enabling activity, and affordable housing secured through the planning system.

The Affordable Homes Programme and any successor arrangements are expected to remain an important source of capital funding for affordable housing delivery. The Council will continue to work closely with Homes England, Registered Providers and development partners to maximise opportunities to deliver additional affordable housing provision, particularly social rented housing, which the evidence identifies as the tenure most capable of meeting local housing needs. The Council will also seek to maximise affordable housing delivery through Section 106 planning obligations and negotiations associated with major development sites, ensuring that new housing growth contributes towards identified affordable housing requirements.

Alongside public subsidy, Registered Providers will continue to play a critical role by investing their own resources and borrowing capacity to support new development. Long-term partnership working with housing associations operating within the District will therefore remain fundamental to increasing housing supply and meeting identified housing needs.

Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Funding

Preventing homelessness remains one of the most cost-effective housing interventions available to the Council. Investment in prevention services can significantly reduce the need for more expensive statutory interventions and temporary accommodation while improving outcomes for residents.

The Council will continue to pursue Government funding opportunities aimed at preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, including homelessness prevention grants, Rough Sleeping Initiative funding and any replacement or successor programmes that may be introduced during the lifetime of the Strategy. These resources support tenancy sustainment, housing advice services, outreach provision, specialist support services and initiatives designed to prevent repeat homelessness.

Temporary accommodation provision may also continue to benefit from programmes such as the Local Authority Housing Fund and future Government initiatives designed to increase the supply of suitable accommodation for homeless households. The acquisition of properties through such programmes can help reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation, improve housing outcomes and generate long-term savings for the Council through reduced temporary accommodation costs.

Specialist and Supported Housing Investment

Meeting the needs of older people, disabled residents, people with mental health needs and other vulnerable groups will require continued investment in specialist and supported housing provision.

Funding opportunities may include capital investment from Registered Providers, Homes England programmes, health and social care funding streams, County Council commissioning arrangements and partnership-based funding initiatives. The Council will work with Leicestershire County Council, the NHS, Integrated Care System partners and support providers to align housing investment with wider health and social care priorities.

Supported Housing Regulatory reforms are likely to increase expectations around quality, governance and resident outcomes. The Council will therefore seek opportunities to support both the development of new specialist accommodation and the improvement of existing provision, ensuring that housing contributes positively to health, independence and wellbeing outcomes. Investment decisions will seek to support a coordinated housing pathway that reduces pressure on institutional care, avoids unnecessary hospital stays and promotes independent living wherever possible.

Investment in Housing Quality and Safety

Improving housing quality remains a key strategic priority and will require investment across all housing tenures.

The Council will continue to utilise its statutory enforcement powers where necessary but will also seek to support improvement activity through advice, partnership working and external funding opportunities. Future investment may include funding programmes linked to housing standards, building safety, decarbonisation initiatives, Houses in Multiple Occupation improvements and measures designed to address poor housing conditions.

Particular attention will be given to supporting improvements that address damp and mould, excess cold, energy inefficiency, poor thermal comfort and other hazards identified through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. These interventions not only improve housing standards but can also contribute to improved public health outcomes and reduced demand upon health and care services.

Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Funding

Housing has a significant role to play in achieving climate change objectives and reducing fuel poverty. Delivering these ambitions will require substantial investment in retrofit and decarbonisation measures across all housing tenures.

The Council will continue to seek opportunities through national retrofit and energy efficiency programmes, including Warm Homes funding, Social Housing Decarbonisation funding, Local Authority Delivery programmes and successor Government initiatives. These programmes can support insulation, heating improvements, renewable energy technologies and wider energy-efficiency measures that help reduce carbon emissions and improve thermal comfort.

Registered Providers are also expected to continue investing in improving the energy performance of their housing stock in response to emerging regulatory requirements and net zero commitments. The Council will support collaboration between providers, landlords and residents to maximise opportunities for investment, particularly where improvements can help reduce fuel poverty and improve health outcomes alongside environmental benefits.

Disabled Facilities Grants and Independent Living

Supporting residents to remain safely and independently within their own homes remains an important strategic objective.

Disabled Facilities Grants will continue to provide an important source of funding for home adaptations that improve accessibility and enable residents to live independently. Adaptations such as accessible bathrooms, ramps, stairlifts and other physical improvements can significantly improve quality of life whilst reducing pressures on health and social care services.

The Council will continue to work through partnership arrangements such as the Lightbulb Programme and Hospital Enablement services to maximise the effectiveness of these resources. The evidence demonstrates that relatively modest investment in housing adaptations can produce significant long-term benefits by preventing hospital admissions, facilitating hospital discharge and delaying or avoiding moves into residential care settings.

Strategic Infrastructure and Placemaking Investment

Housing cannot be considered in isolation from the wider infrastructure needed to support sustainable communities. Future growth will require continued investment in transport, education, healthcare, community facilities, digital connectivity, green infrastructure and climate resilience measures.

The Council will seek to align housing growth with infrastructure investment through the planning process, developer contributions, partnership working and engagement with infrastructure providers. Strategic growth locations provide opportunities to secure investment in community facilities and sustainable infrastructure that will benefit both existing and future residents.

Ensuring that housing delivery is supported by appropriate infrastructure will be critical to creating successful places and achieving long-term community sustainability.