



Sustainable Community Strategy

2008-2028

Introduction

This Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our long term vision for the District of Blaby for the period 2008 – 2028. It replaces the Community Plan which was produced in 2005.

This vision has been developed by involving representatives of local people, gathering evidence and capturing community aspirations, to set out key priorities for improvement and ambitions for our district, so that together the organisations who provide services locally can bring about real improvements for the people living, working and visiting Blaby.

About Blaby Together

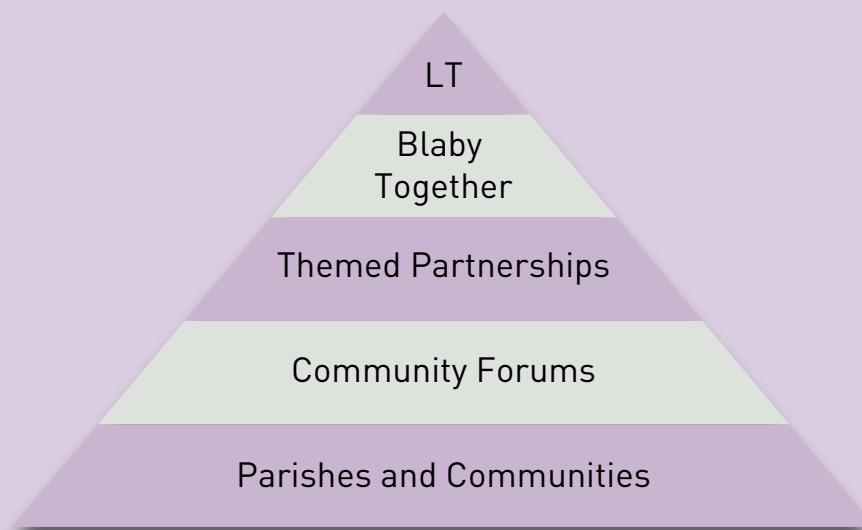
Blaby Together is the name of the Districts' Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which brings together people from a range of key organisations who provide services and have a stake in the future of Blaby. The members of this partnership are listed at the end of this document

This document has been produced by Blaby Together to deliver "Quality of Life" improvements for the communities within our South Leicestershire District. Blaby Together is determined to do things differently to deliver improved public services so make Blaby the best possible place in which to live and work for everyone, now and in the future. In doing so, Blaby will contribute to improvements in the wider area of Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

About our Structure and Partners

Blaby Together works within a wider framework of partnerships. This includes Leicestershire Together, the countywide LSP, district wide and county wide themed partnerships, the district's three Community Forums and more local work with Parish Councils.

This structure allows "bottom-up" identification of needs and priorities to support effective strategic planning and priority setting so that real improvements of relevance to local people emerge



A vision for Blaby

In 2028 Blaby will be made up of thriving sustainable, safe, healthy and secure communities where people are happy to live and work and the District is recognised and celebrated for:

Its clean, attractive and sustainable environment where:

- The economy is prospering and prosperous
- It is easy to get about using sustainable, integrated transport networks
- The physical environment across the whole of the district makes people proud
- We are all doing everything we can to respond to the challenges of climate change
- People can afford to live in high quality, sustainable homes in strong viable communities

The safety, strength and health of its communities where:

- People work together to make their communities safer
- Anti-social behaviour is a thing from the past
- People from differing backgrounds and needs are active and supported in their community
- Communities and individuals have the skills and confidence to actively work together in their communities
- All people are as healthy and active as they can be
- Older people are independent and enjoy a good quality of life

The contribution of its children and young people where:

- Children and young people make positive choices about health and behaviour
- Young people are actively involved in planning and delivering improvements to services
- All children and young people can reach their potential

High quality, responsive, efficient and valued public services where:

- Agencies communicate and work together to provide customer focused services
- Infrastructure is available to support locally accessible services
- Services perform well in the eyes of the customer
- Customers receive the very best services.

About the Sustainable Community Strategy

The SCS sets out the things that local people see as a priority. It is based on evidence and information (as set out in *) on what local people and groups feel is important, what needs exist and how services are performing.

This SCS builds on the District of Blaby Community Plan, 2005, the first (countywide) Local Area Agreement 2003-8 and current work by the Countywide LSP, Leicestershire Together. It informs the emerging countywide SCS and new LAA for 2008-2012.

This new Community Strategy outlines improvement priorities for the District of Blaby in the form of outcomes we want to work together to achieve by:

These outcomes are organised in themes which then focus on people and places, and have been developed through partnerships and professional expertise, based on the local evidence reports.

Any SCS should show how, often competing, priorities for economic, social and environmental issues can be reconciled so that Blaby in 2028 is a good place to live, work and visit for future generations.

To help achieve the right balance for sustainable development we have carried out a Sustainability Appraisal, Risk Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment of this SCS.

Blaby in Leicestershire, in the East Midlands, in England

Blaby is not an island, cut off from other areas. There are a range of complex socio-economic environmental and demographic inter-relationships between Blaby, Leicestershire, the City of Leicester, other parts of the East Midlands and adjoining regions.

This means that effective solutions to things like transport, housing and economy and climate change need us to work with neighbouring local authorities and other agencies to find and deliver the best answers.

On some issues Blaby can play its own part in addressing the "big" issues. On others we will contribute to wider agendas.

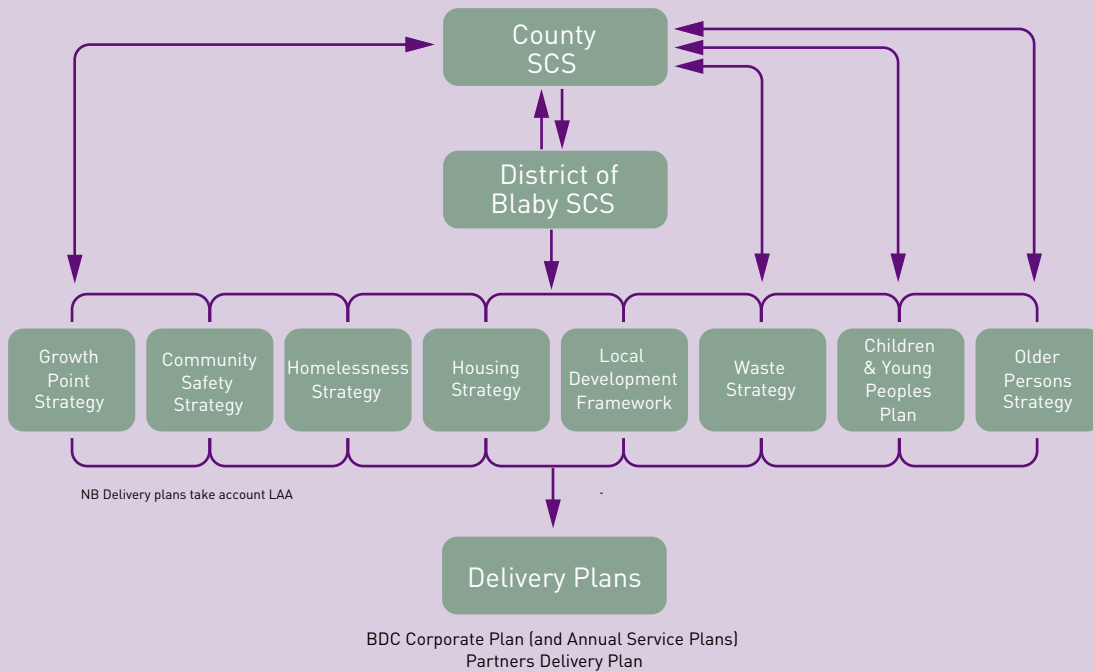
On a regional level, the successful implementation of regional strategies such as the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Improvement Strategy will both influence and rely on the achievement of successful outcomes locally.

Locally the boundary of Leicester and Leicestershire as a sub-region makes up a reasonably good match for economic, labour market, travel to work, shopping catchment and housing market areas. This is being reflected in enhanced joint working. This is reflected in things like the 6C's Growth Point Project and enhanced joint working on economic, housing, transport and strategic green infrastructure issues. There is scope in consolidating collaboration between the District, City and County on this by developing a Multi-Area Agreement (MAA).

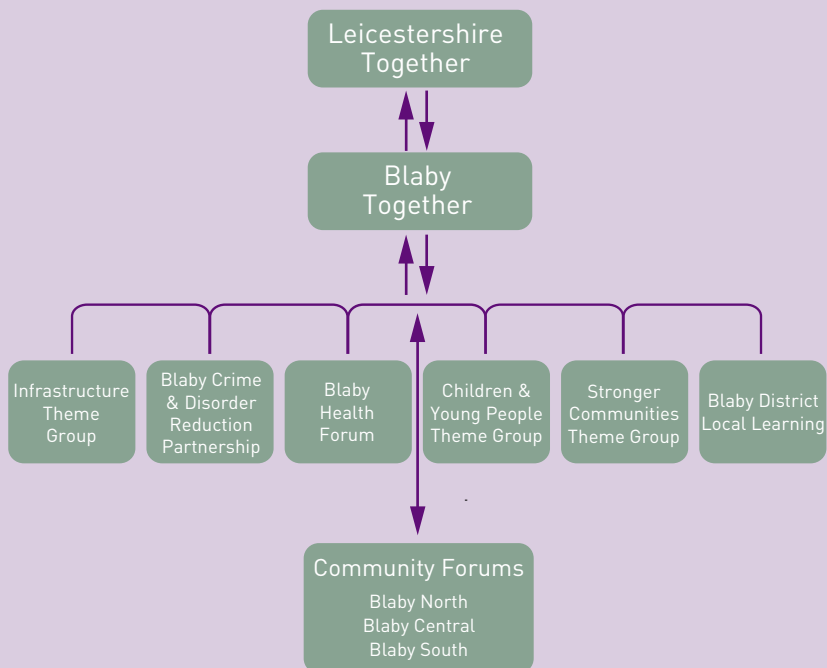
Where the SCS fits in

This SCS sits on top of other more detailed strategic frameworks and documents covering themes and agencies. The following diagrams shows some of the key bits of the jigsaw in terms of strategies, plans and partnerships.

HOW PLANS AND STRATEGIES FIT TOGETHER



HOW 'PARTNERSHIPS' CURRENTLY FIT TOGETHER



This is Blaby: Summary of Issues

To develop this SCS Blaby Together looked at lots of facts and figures about Blaby.

Key issues from this were:

- The district of Blaby covers 129 km² and contains a mix of urban and rural areas.
- There is a population of 92,500 living in approximately 37,000 households.
- Overall deprivation in the District is low – 324th out of 354 English local authority districts.
- Blaby is a good place to live – ranked 37th out of over 400 local authority areas in the Readers Digest ‘best place to bring up your family’ survey and 24th in the Halifax ‘Quality of Life’ Survey.
- The District has an ageing population as is the trend nationally. Across Leicestershire the older population is forecast to increase faster than both regionally and nationally.
- 5.7% of the population are from a non-white ethnic origin (8.7% nationally) and 5.2% state that their first language is not English.
- 14.7% of the population are identified as being disabled or having a long-term limiting illness.
- 5% of residents were satisfied with the cleanliness of the district (best score in County), we have low levels of litter and graffiti and satisfaction with our recycling service was 86%.
- Green spaces are viewed as an important part of making the district a good place to live.
- The public and parish councils rate the maintenance and cleanliness of the green spaces in the District as important.
- Public transport in order to access services is a concern to both residents and Members particularly in relation to younger, older and other vulnerable people.
- There are good transport links in relation to the road network with the M1 and M69 running through the District and Junction 21 being sited here.
- This transport infrastructure brings with it issues of noise, light and air pollution and congestion.
- There are currently 5 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within the District.
- The District has a number of leisure facilities and businesses. Facilities include ‘Fosse Park’ shopping park, the Meridian leisure complex and a number of public and private leisure centres.
- Major employers also include the Police, whose HQ is at St. Johns, Next, Alliance and Leicester and the businesses parks within .is situated within the district. #
- The town of Blaby is a thriving retail centre.
- The district is situated close to the city of Leicester which brings increased employment opportunities as well as additional access to cultural and leisure facilities.
- Crime levels are relatively low with a rate of 35.5 crimes per 1,000 population compared to 42.8 in Leicestershire and 60.7 for England and Wales.
- Levels of Anti-social Behaviour incidents have been decreasing and residents feel this to be the case also with 52% saying that it has reduced and only 12% perceiving high levels of ASB in the District .
- 85% of people say that they feel safe when outside in the District.
- Concerns have been raised by the public, Members and the Police

about the behaviour of Young People, particularly those influenced by alcohol abuse. This is evidenced by the higher than average of hospital admissions of young males for alcohol misuse.

- 52% of residents felt that teenagers hanging around streets was a problem.
- 50% of residents do not feel that parents take responsibility for their children.
- 46% of residents believe that facilities for teenagers in the District most need improving.
- In terms of educational attainment 55% of 15 year olds attain 5 A*-C grade GCSEs (56% nationally). There are some areas within the District that perform well above this, however, there are some parts which have significantly lower than the average achievement in this area.
- Health within the District is relatively good. However, obesity both in children and adults is considered to be the top health challenge facing the nation and this is reflected in the levels of obesity in the District (24% of adults), the relatively low levels of uptake of sport and health eating.
- The average household income at £35,000/annum is higher than the national average of £32,000.
- In relation to housing, there is a high proportion of owner-occupiers (87%). The average house price is below the national average of £230,000 at £191,300.
- There is a relatively small supply of social and private rented housing within the District. 20% of residents feel that affordable, decent housing was the one thing that most needed improving in the District.

People and Places in Blaby

The evidence showed that some of the issues affecting the District have a particular importance in certain geographical areas or for some people.

In developing the SCS we have used the evidence to link together themes, people and places so that what we do makes a difference where it is most needed, be that in terms of geography, customer or community.

Delivering and Managing Performance

The current District of Blaby Community Plan has been in place since 2005 and set out a number of priorities and actions

Progress in delivering these has been monitored and reported to the Blaby Together Board and partner agencies such as the District Council.

Highlights include:

Feeling Safer

- The Local Government User Satisfaction Survey reports that 85% of people feel safe when outside in Blaby District (the 2010 target is 90%).
- Only 12% of residents perceive a high level of ASB in Blaby, the lowest score in Leicestershire.

Supporting & Developing Children & Young People

- Successful bid to the Big Lottery to fund £200,000 of play provision in 5 locations around the District.

- Hosting of a Children's Centre and Extended Schools Programme co-ordinator at Blaby District Council to facilitate a "good start in life" for younger people growing up in the District.
- The mainstreaming of a Youth Outreach Worker post through Blaby District Council, who engages with Young People linked to Anti-Social Behaviour "hotspots", and has successfully introduced schemes that have reduced ASB in the District.

Lifelong Learning

- Widening Participation – completed a Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Project led by Voluntary Action Blaby District. This scheme ran in Enderby and St Johns Ward. It was designed towards assisting the engagement of adults in learning opportunities.
- Higher level ESOL courses offered through South Leicestershire College and funded by a learning Partnership European Social Fund project aimed to help people who are under employed because of their lack of higher level English skills. The project is worth £430,000 over two years.

Enabling a Healthier Lifestyle

- Collaborative Working Project - 3 'training' sessions held for front line staff from Blaby District Council, Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust, Leicestershire County Council, The Pension Service and the voluntary and community sector leading to more effective and joined up working.
- Health and Wellbeing Award - Multi-agency pilot project which aims to support employers that take positive steps to improving the health of their employees. Leicestershire Constabulary and the Alliance and Leicester are currently piloting the award.
- Cook and Eat - Funding from the LSP and the Leicester Learning Partnership has enabled a wide range of residents and groups to attend 'Cook and Eat' programmes. These practical courses focus on improving people's skills in making healthy food choices covering issues such as shopping and food preparation.

Stronger Communities

- The Council for Voluntary Service and the Volunteer Centre for Blaby District have amalgamated to form Voluntary Action Blaby District.
- Voluntary Action Blaby District has moved from three locations around the District into "the Pavilion" the new Community & Leisure Resource Centre for Blaby District.
- The Community Garden at Enderby ("A Place to Grow") has become established and successfully had its first harvest/open day which was held on 20th September 2007. The project supports a whole range of people with mental and physical disabilities. A bid earlier in the year to fund a part-time worker was also successful.

Infrastructure

- A regular Farmers Market now takes place in the District. The market offers local produce with less "food miles" between the producer and consumer!
- Completion of the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan offering regeneration opportunities for Blaby, with all the components of a thriving local economy

One of the key delivery vehicles for improvements is the Local Area Agreement (LAA) negotiated between the County Council, other partners, including Blaby District Council and the government.

The LAA is designed to agreement on a small set of priorities locally and then to work together to deliver improvements.

The first LAA was negotiated and then agreed in March 2006, and has already resulted in improved outcomes The next LAA is currently being developed by Leicestershire Together. The evidence of need and priorities for the District of Blaby as set out in this SCS have been fed into the development of the new County wide SCS and the next LAA for 2008- 2012

Consultation and Engagement

To be completed

Delivering our Ambitions for Blaby

To be completed

Membership of Blaby Together

Logos to be inserted

Abbreviations

To be completed

This document can be made available on request, in other languages and formats (large print, Braille or on audio tape) by contacting:

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