

Cosby Neighbourhood Plan

General Information Statement about the Planning System and Neighbourhood Plans

This statement has been produced to ensure that voters, in the referendum on the **Cosby Neighbourhood Plan [24 November 2022]**, have sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision on the referendum question. It sets out a brief summary of the Town and Country Planning System and the role of Neighbourhood Plans.

The Town and Country Planning System

Planning involves making decisions about the future of our cities, towns and countryside and considering the sustainable needs of future communities. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need some form of planning consent. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Blaby District Council, as the local planning authority, is responsible for making decisions on whether applications for planning permission are appropriate. The starting point for decision making is the development plan unless material considerations, such as national planning policy and guidance, indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and was last updated in July 2021. The framework gives guidance to local planning authorities in drawing up local plans and on making decisions on planning applications. This includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The Planning Practice Guidance was launched in 2013. It is a web-based resource which contains further planning guidance to support the delivery of the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

The Development Plan

Development Plans are made up of planning policy documents which help to guide development within a local planning authority area. They set out detailed planning policies, which planning officers use to make their decisions on planning applications.

Local planning authorities, such as Blaby District Council, must prepare a Local Plan for their area which sets out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted, and where.

In February 2013, Blaby District Council adopted the Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document as part of its Local Plan for the District. The Local Plan (Core Strategy) sets out the spatial plan for the District up to 2029.

The Local Plan for Blaby District will also include the Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document. This identifies specific land-use development allocations and policy designations. It also sets out a detailed series of development management policies which will be used to assess planning applications against. This document was adopted by the District Council in February 2019.

More information regarding the Blaby District Local Plan is available from the [Blaby District Council Local Plan webpage](https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plan/) (<https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plan/>).

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced under the 2011 Localism Act to give members of the community a more hands on role in the planning of their neighbourhoods. It introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their local area by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood plans enable communities to develop a shared vision for their area and deliver the sustainable development they need through planning policies relating to the development and use of land.

Neighbourhood plans can be prepared by Parish Councils or neighbourhood forums (in areas not covered by a Parish). The scope / range of planning related topics which the neighbourhood plan covers can be decided by the local community. The plan must however, meet the following 'Basic Conditions':

- have regard to national planning policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (i.e. the local plan); and
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

Once drafted, a neighbourhood plan is required to undergo an independent examination. The appointed examiner will check that the neighbourhood development plan meets the basic conditions. The examiner will produce a report stating whether any modifications should be made to the plan and whether it should proceed to referendum stage. This is to make sure that referendums only take place when neighbourhood plans are clear, deliverable and sustainable.

The Council then decide, having regard to the statutory criteria, whether to accept the recommendations of the examiner and proceed to referendum. All residents registered to vote within the plan area will be eligible to vote in the referendum which will ask the following question:

“Do you want Blaby District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Cosby to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

The plan will require at least 50% of the vote in the referendum voting in favour to take the plan forward. The local planning authority must ‘make’ (adopt) the plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the Referendum is held, if the vote is in favour of the plan.

Once ‘made’, the neighbourhood plan forms part of the statutory development plan and will be used in determining decisions on planning applications.

Cosby Neighbourhood Plan

The Cosby Neighbourhood Plan addresses the need for sustainable development within the parish of Cosby. It has been produced by a Steering Group comprising Parish Councillors and local residents. It has been led and co-ordinated by the Steering Group and supported by Blaby District Council.

The proposed version of the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan underwent a period of statutory public consultation during March and May 2022. The plan was then subject to an Independent Examination. As part of this process the appointed Independent Examiner, Christopher Collison, decided that a Public Hearing into the Neighbourhood Plan was not required.

Blaby District Council received the Examiner’s Report into the Neighbourhood Plan in June 2022. In their report the Examiner concludes that the Plan, subject to modifications, meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to a referendum based on the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan Area.

At its meeting on 20 September 2022, Blaby District Council approved the Examiner’s recommended modifications to the Plan and approved that the amended Plan should proceed to a referendum. The referendum has been scheduled to be held in November 2022.

The Examiner’s Report on the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan is available on the [Blaby District Council Neighbourhood Planning webpage](https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/guidance-and-policies/neighbourhood-planning/) (https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/guidance-and-policies/neighbourhood-planning/).

Blaby District Council, October 2022.