

Cosby Neighbourhood Plan Referendum – FAQ sheet

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a planning document prepared by the local community for the local community. It gives local people the chance to plan for their own area by developing policies that will guide and shape development in the Plan area for the future. Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Government in 2011 with a view to offering communities the chance to take a greater degree of control of development in their areas.

What is a ‘Neighbourhood Area’?

A Neighbourhood Area is the designated geographical area which a Neighbourhood Plan is being / has been prepared for. In the case of the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan, the designated Neighbourhood Area is the entire area of Cosby parish.

Who wrote the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan?

Preparation of the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan was led by a Steering Group comprising Parish Councillors and local residents, with support from Blaby District Council throughout the process.

Why have I not heard anything about the Plan before now?

The Cosby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have prepared the Plan and have had responsibility for consulting on it and engaging with the community during the preparation process. Details of how they consulted on the Plan can be found in their [Consultation Statement](https://www.blaby.gov.uk/media/wfnihi5s/cosby-neighbourhood-plan-consultation-statement.pdf) (https://www.blaby.gov.uk/media/wfnihi5s/cosby-neighbourhood-plan-consultation-statement.pdf)

Where can I find a copy of the Plan?

The Plan can be accessed on the [Blaby District Council website](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/). The document is called ‘Submission Version of Cosby Neighbourhood Plan’.

A hard copy of the Plan is available to view at Blaby District Council Offices in Narborough.

Has the Plan been subject to any kind of scrutiny / testing up to this point?

Yes. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant national legislation which sets out key, statutory stages in its preparation, including consultation. Various consultation exercises have been undertaken on the Plan, with people providing their views on it.

Furthermore, once the Steering Group prepared their final version of the Plan, in accordance with the legislation, the Plan was submitted for an Examination with an independent neighbourhood plan Examiner. The Examiner tested the Plan against something called the 'basic conditions' set out in the legislation. The Examiner published his report into the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan in June 2022, and concluded that subject to a number of modifications to ensure the Plan met the required 'basic conditions', the Plan could proceed to Referendum. The Examiner's Report can be found 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 voted to accept the Examiner's recommended modifications. The final version of the Plan, with all of the Examiner's recommended modifications made, is now the subject of this referendum.

How will the Plan be used to decide planning applications?

If the Plan is successful at referendum, it will then be 'made' (adopted) by Blaby District Council, at which point it will become part of the development plan for this area, against which planning applications will be assessed. Therefore, when planning applications are submitted for sites within Cosby parish, planning officers will assess the proposals against not only the District Council's Local Plan, but also the policies within the Cosby Neighbourhood Plan, before arriving at a decision.

For clarity, the determination of planning applications will remain the responsibility of Blaby District Council (and Leicestershire County Council in special circumstances).

What happens after the Referendum?

If the Plan is successful at Referendum (the majority of the voting turnout vote in favour of the Plan), Blaby District Council will then 'make' (adopt) the Plan, at which point it becomes part of the Development Plan for the area, against which decisions on planning applications will be made.

If the Plan is not successful at referendum, Blaby District Council will not be able to 'make' (adopt) the Plan, and the draft Plan will be of no weight when determining planning applications. The Cosby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will then decide whether or not they wish to continue to prepare a Plan that does get public support.