

12/01840/OUT, Land off Kirk Ley, East Leake.
Response from East Leake Neighbourhood Plan Project Team

East Leake has formed a Neighbourhood Plan Project Team to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to cover the Neighbourhood Area of the East Leake Parish. The designation of the Neighbourhood Area is currently awaiting approval from Rushcliffe Borough Council. A vision statement has been drafted, and will shortly be distributed to the residents of the village for comment. See Appendix 1. The Neighbourhood Plan will establish planning principles that take forward the aspirations in the vision under the following headings:

- A viable community (community feel / employment)
- Green environment
- An attractive village centre
- Easier to get around (walking, cycling, wider links)
- Better facilities and services
- Housing for all

The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to identify specific sites for housing development; however the contents are likely include the following:

- An envelope for built development around East Leake
- A plan for phasing over the whole 13 year planning period the 400 additional homes required by the Borough Council (assuming their proposed core strategy is approved and adopted)
- Specification and prioritisation of infrastructure requirements for the additional housing (including Health Centre, Schools, Sewerage, Car Parking, Village Centre, Transport, etc)
- Target numbers for different housing types/size
- Preferred housing design/styles
- Size of developments (large v small estates)
- Infill v green field developments
- Preferred locations for different types of housing
- Excellent pedestrian and cycle connectivity between existing and new housing areas, and between new housing areas and facilities and employment
- Areas targeted for development to provide employment.

A Community-led plan for East Leake is being developed alongside the Neighbourhood Plan by the East Leake Community Plan Group, which recently surveyed all households in East Leake on a range of issues, including a section on Planning and Housing to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. This section of the survey is attached as Appendix 2. The survey has achieved a response rate of 38.6% and results will be available mid December 2012.

A large tranche of new housing has been built in East Leake in recent years and needs time to become assimilated. In order for East Leake to now develop into a fully rounded and sustainable community rather than a collection of disjointed commuter estates, future developments require thought and probably phasing, along with a prioritised plan for infrastructure development to support the additional population.

Approval of such a large development at this time would pre-empt and undermine the planning processes that are under way, at both the Neighbourhood and Borough levels. The community survey results are imminent and it is these that should inform future developments in East Leake, not the financial interest of developers in a hurried "first past the post" race.

Workshops facilitated by CABI have been held to assist the Neighbourhood Planning process, and one of the tools used was the Design Council's Building for life criteria, see <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Documents/Documents/OurWork/CABI/Building%20for%20Life/Building%20for%20Life%2012.pdf>

The group has made a preliminary assessment of the scheme proposed against these criteria. In summary – what is proposed lacks imagination, innovation and distinctiveness, and there are some serious areas of concern. See Appendix 3.

East Leake Neighbourhood Plan: Draft Vision

Introduction

East Leake is a rural village in south Nottinghamshire, set in a green hollow surrounded by hills. The built area is divided through the centre by a green wedge, the result of the Kingston Brook and its associated floodplain. Over the last half century, it has grown rapidly from being a linear village at the junction of roads that emanate north, south, south-west, east and west, to being a much larger settlement of some 6000 people. It is very well connected to the rest of the East Midlands region and beyond, being close to Loughborough, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester, and having motorway, rail and airport links within a few miles of the village.



East Leake set in a green hollow...

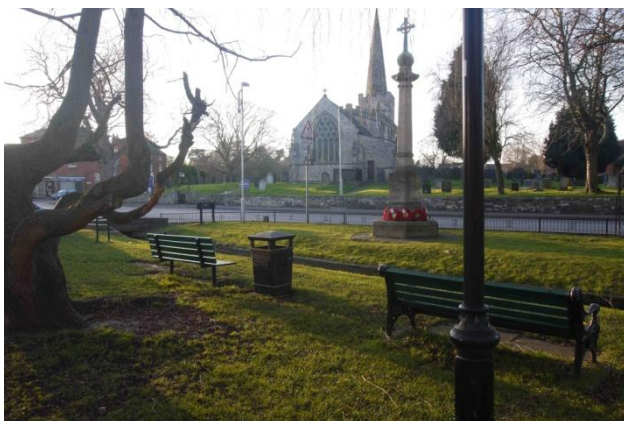


...surrounded by hills

East Leake is largely self-contained and acts as a hub for surrounding smaller villages. It has a historic centre at one end of Main Street and a contrasting, more modern shopping centre at the other. There are a wide range of services and a good selection of shops in the village, plus considerable employment, especially at British Gypsum.

Why we need a vision

This vision is our aspiration for shaping East Leake over the next 15 – 20 years, by setting goals that are both realistic and achievable. We believe we need a vision to ensure that East Leake develops in the way the community wants, for the benefit of all.



St Mary's Church commenced in the 11th century



Sheepwash Brook on Brookside

Our vision

A viable community. We wish to maintain the character of East Leake as a place with a strong sense of community, supporting a wide range of facilities and services. We aim to enhance local employment opportunities, in particular improving facilities for start-up businesses.

Maintaining the green environment. We wish to conserve and enhance the rural character of the village, and to preserve the ring of green undeveloped hills surrounding the village. Further, we intend to exploit and enhance the network of informal green spaces within the village, so that they support attractive pedestrian and cycle routes connecting the different parts of the village.



Green wedge dividing the village



Shopping centre

An attractive village centre. We are concerned that at present the shopping centre is something of a muddle; we will endeavour to improve the quality of the entire public realm in the village centre by making it more pedestrian-friendly and safer, resolving parking problems, reducing traffic dominance and radically improving the quality of building design and materials. We will also encourage retention and widening of the range of shops and facilities that serve the needs of the community.

Easier to get around. We will seek to improve connections between the different parts of the village, and out into the countryside beyond, for both pedestrians and cyclists; in particular we want all new developments to enhance the network of routes within the village. We will press for improvements to public and community transport links with facilities and transport interchanges outside the village.

Better facilities and services. We believe that the capacity of essential services such as health, education and drainage should be increased in step with any new developments within East Leake and surrounding smaller villages, and will press hard for this. Further, we wish to improve facilities for young people, and in particular provide more activities for teenagers



Georgian house in Station Road



New private housing at Osier Fields

Housing for all. We are concerned that recent new housing developments have been mainly targeted at well-off families; our aim is to maintain the diversity of the village population by ensuring that new housing is provided for young people, lower income families and older people. We will restrict new housing to sites within walking distance of the village centre, and will ensure that its character is sympathetic to the local tradition in terms of materials and scale. We will encourage smaller scale housing developments on infill sites in preference to large-scale estates on green field sites. We will encourage and support improvements in the quality and energy efficiency of older housing.

APPENDIX 2 – RELEVANT SECTION OF COMMUNITY PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE (RESULTS AWAITED)

9. Planning and Housing - In this section, we'd like to find out what you think about planning and housing in East Leake.

THE RUSHCLIFFE CORE STRATEGY REQUIRES THAT AT LEAST 400 NEW HOMES ARE BUILT IN EAST LEAKE DURING THE NEXT 13 YEARS

We cannot change the 'Core Strategy' which is based on Central Government requirements, BUT if the Parish Council instigate a 'Neighbourhood Plan' the community can have its say on HOW, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT TYPE and also other planning issues such as employment opportunities in the village, village services, transport, village centre layout and design.

U. Please rank the need to build the following housing types within East Leake.	High			Low
	1	2	3	4
U1. Large executive houses with 4 or more bedrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U2. Smaller 3-4 bedroomed houses including semi-detached.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U3. Homes and apartments suitable for smaller families and single people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U4. Bungalows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U5. Sheltered Accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

V. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about housing development in East Leake?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
V1. I am happy with the styles, designs and types of homes in East Leake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V2. New housing should be provided in large estates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V3. The building of the proposed 400 new homes should be phased in over the next 13 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V4. Following the development of these 400 new homes, East Leake should continue to expand further.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V5. Priority should be given to the re-development of existing built areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V6. Development on greenfield land surrounding the present built areas of the village is the best option.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V7. Housing should be located within easy reach by foot to the village centre and public transport.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Planning and Housing - Tell us what you think about planning and housing in East Leake (cont...)

W. There are financial incentives for the village which come with new housing development. If we could influence where this money should be allocated, rank the following in order of priority.	High			Low
	1	2	3	4
W1. Building a new health centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W2. Providing more car parking within the village centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W3. Maintaining our local village environment (e.g. litter picking, keeping the brooks clean etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W4. Improving our local transport links.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W5. Refurbishing the playground facilities within East Leake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W6. Building a large hall/entertainments venue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W7. Making our village look more attractive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W8. Extending our primary schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W9. Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything else you want to say about planning and housing in East Leake?

APPENDIX 3 – ASSESSMENT OF KIRK LEY PROPOSALS AGAINST BUILDING FOR LIFE CRITERIA

INTEGRATING INTO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Criteria	Neighbourhood Plan Group's Comments	Score
<p><u>1. Connections:</u> Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?</p>	<p>Partially met.</p> <p>The proposals as submitted isolate the existing agricultural business into an island, with no opportunity for expansion. This could threaten future employment opportunities in the village. The existing agricultural business could cause difficulties for the adjacent new housing, e.g. night working, early morning noise, flood lighting at night. No assessment of this has been included. The proposed additional screening may be insufficient to alleviate these problems.</p> <p>If this site is developed, it may be more suitable for small business use, including agricultural/horticultural related businesses and smallholdings, which would be well suited to this site. No consideration has been given to alternative land use.</p> <p>Reference is made to signposts to encourage cycling to the village, but no facilities are provided and Brookside is a busy narrow road with only one pavement.</p> <p>Good efforts have been made to connect to existing neighbouring rural footpaths. However the pedestrian walking route into the centre of the village, including the local primary school, is poor. The proposed footpath past the flood lagoon comes to an end on Brookside where the brook joins the road and pedestrians/cyclists would need to cross at this point, where the road and pavement are narrow. There is little prospect of a footpath or cyclepath on the side of the road where the brook runs alongside it, until the footpath starts after Burton Walk. No crossings across Kirk Ley or Brookside are included in the scheme.</p> <p>There is no footpath/cyclepath connection onto Rempstone Road at the top end of the site, which would be convenient for walkers/cyclists heading towards the proposed new rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall, or towards Loughborough.</p>	Amber
<p><u>2. Facilities and Services:</u> Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?</p>	<p>Not met. There are serious concerns.</p> <p>Primary School provision, as the catchment area school is over capacity at present.</p> <p>The sewerage provision is believed to be inadequate in this area of the village, and this does not appear to have been addressed in the scheme.</p> <p>The village centre is within walking distance, but not conveniently so, especially for the less mobile. This includes the library and Health Centre, both of which are in urgent need of replacement/improvement. The Health Centre is already inadequate for the needs of existing residents.</p> <p>Play space is included in the scheme, though there is no imaginative vision for this, and no pitches for ball games. There is no</p>	Red

	<p>management plan for the play space. Its siting adjacent to the new roundabout will make access to it from housing near to the new site problematic.</p> <p>There are no shops, pubs, cafes etc included in the scheme.</p>	
<p>3. <u>Public Transport:</u> Does the scheme have easy access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?</p>	<p>Partially met. The bus stops are close to the site. The bus services have their limitations, and need to be improved, e.g. addition of a late evening bus from Loughborough.</p> <p>There is no suitable pedestrian or cycle route from the scheme.</p>	Amber
<p>4. <u>Meeting Local Housing requirements:</u> Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?</p>	<p>Not met. There are few details of housing size / type provided. It should be noted that the perceived need is for low cost, smaller homes, and homes for the older resident wishing to downsize, particularly bungalows. From the “artist’s impressions” provided, the development appears to be more biased towards yet another collection of large executive homes.</p> <p>Homes for the elderly/less mobile should be located at the end of the development nearest to the village centre, to provide the shortest and flattest walk. However this is the area adjacent to the proposed play space.</p> <p>There is nothing in the scheme that offers live/work possibilities.</p> <p>The tenure mix is not specified in any detail in the application. A strategy for this has yet to be developed for East Leake, having regard to the Borough’s targets.</p>	Red

CREATING A PLACE

<p>5. <u>Character:</u> Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?</p>	<p>Not met. This is a generic housing development – it could be built anywhere. It feels like another anonymous area of standard new suburban housing development. There is no distinctive vision.</p>	Red
<p>6. <u>Working with the site and its context:</u> Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?</p>	<p>Not met. The development would mean that the built environment will be more visible from roads surrounding the village and sets a dangerous precedent in building close to the top of the ridge to the south of the village, which is a long held boundary for the built envelope. This green field site provides considerable visual and recreational amenity in this area of the village at present.</p> <p>The site is not contiguous to the existing built environment.</p> <p>A virtue is being made of the proposed water feature(s) and wildlife area, but these are small.</p> <p>It is said that the ridge along Rempstone road was an old route across to West Leake, possibly of Roman origin and it is felt that a more thorough archeological assessment is needed.</p> <p>The area is a rich habitat for birds and mammals, and the assessment in the documentation seems cursory and biased.</p>	Red
<p>7. <u>Creating well defined streets and spaces:</u></p>	<p>Partially met. There is too little detail to have confidence in the quality of the design.</p>	Amber

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well.		
8. <u>Easy to find your way around:</u> Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?	The layout of the streets appears acceptable. Navigation is aided by the nature of the sloping site	Green

STREET AND HOME

9. <u>Streets for all:</u> Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?	Not met. There is no provision for cyclists. Winding streets in other new developments in East Leake are proving unhelpful to vehicle and pedestrian movements. The circuitous internal routes will limit speeding to some extent, but the overall lack of visibility and legibility of the site will cause problems between pedestrians and cars at numerous points. It is difficult to see how the streets could function as social spaces.	Red
10. <u>Car parking:</u> Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?	There is very little about parking in the documentation; there is no strategy articulated to support the street scene. The winding streets do not appear wide enough to accommodate on street parking safely. Visitor parking is likely to be an issue.	Red
11. <u>Public and private spaces:</u> Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?	Most public areas are overlooked to some extent by housing. Nothing is included about street/footpath lighting or maintenance of vegetation, which could lead to dark, unsafe areas. No management plan is included.	Amber
12. <u>External storage and amenity space:</u> Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?	Not met. There is no vision articulated.	Red