

1. Objection to Site Allocation for Extension to Sand and Gravel Quarry “East Leake North”.

East Leake Parish Council **strongly objects** to the allocation of site reference MP2q designated “East Leake North”, on the following grounds:

- Proximity to existing housing, including new developments on Cornflower Way and at the top of Meeting House Close which are not shown on the map of the site. Residents are concerned about dust and noise from quarrying equipment and from lorries used to transport the quarried material for processing, and a full analysis is required of the potential impact with details of the operation and proposed mitigating measures subject to public consultation.
- Proximity to homes also increases potential danger to children, especially if deep water is present.
- Proximity to the main East Leake Playing Fields provision, also not shown on the map. The playing fields are used by players of all ages, including children, and windborne dust could give rise to respiratory issues.
- Impact on wildlife by sacrificing an area of habitat currently rich in a variety of species of mammals and birds.
- Potential negative impact on Local Wildlife Sites – Sheepwash Brook Wetlands adjacent to the site and Manor Farm close by.
- Threat to historic bridge which is a remnant of the ancient road from East Leake to Loughborough. We understand that this was preserved by burying it on the island in the centre of the lake (see letter from a resident at Appendix 1 below). There is some local talk also of a Holy Well in the same area.
- Loss of amenity to users of the public right of way to Rempstone and the historical site of St Peter in the Rushes. To provide access to the quarry extension a bridge would be required over Sheepwash Brook, and unless carefully positioned this could be an ugly and dominant feature in this area of amenity enjoyed by many residents, with the potential to disrupt and pollute the watercourse.
- East Leake has a “made” Neighbourhood Plan, whose policy E1 protects the ring of ridges surrounding the village, to provide a ring of green when viewed from inside the village and a circle of green fields screening the village when viewed from outside. This site lies on Ridge C shown in Fig 5.1/1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not clear from the plans how this development would impact on the ridgeline in the short term or permanently and this should be considered.
- Section 5.2 and policy E2 of the East Leake Neighbourhood Plan also have some relevance to this proposal. Policy E2 protects green corridors (including the course of the Sheepwash Brook) and local wildlife sites.
- As well as threat to the green corridor there is a threat to the visual amenity value of Sheepwash Brook which flows on through the village of East Leake and forms a major attraction in the conservation area. Any future quarrying operation would have to be designed so that the water flow through the brook is neither increased nor reduced, and does not cause pollution or silting.
- The site lies over an area that already has consent for mining of gypsum and there are concerns that a combination of mining and surface quarrying could be dangerous. Has a combined risk assessment been undertaken? Would quarrying for sand and gravel cause the underlying

gypsum reserves to be sterilised? Does the area have oil and/or shale gas deposits creating additional potential conflict?

- This is in the safeguarded area for East Midlands Airport and creation of additional water bodies could cause danger to aircraft from bird strikes.
- Continued use of the processing plant – this will extend by a further period of at least 4 years the adverse impact on residents close to the processing plant.
- Potential that extending the quarry will delay the landscape restoration of the earlier phases, jeopardising regeneration of wildlife and provision of public access to restored areas.
- Part of the justification for this site is to provide a geographical spread of sites. If the huge site at Barton (MP2s plus Nottingham City part of the site) is developed, this argument is weakened.
- Should this proposal go forward to the next stage of consultation then detailed restoration plans would be needed so that the public be given an opportunity to comment. There is alarm spreading that excavated quarries could be used for landfill at some time in the future. If there is any chance of this highly unsuitable site being taken forward, restoration plans presented for consultation must guarantee the increased amenity value of the restored area and provide public access in a safe manner with car park provision for visitors.

2. Comments on Policies in the Plan

- **Policy SP2** prioritizes extension of existing sites over creating new ones, and while we understand the arguments given for this, we disagree with the policy. The overriding criteria to be considered when allocating sites should be the impacts on residents nearby. Site extensions mean that the same residents endure the burden of noise and pollution, and for longer periods of time. A green field site away from habitation could be preferable. We request changes to the wording of this policy and para 3.11.
- **Restoration and Public Access – policy SP3** has the laudable aim of restoration to maximise biodiversity gains, however it says nothing about public access. When restoration schemes are drawn up public access should be considered with the aim, where appropriate, to provide safe, convenient access to the public, including disabled.
- **Omission** - We cannot see where consideration is given to sites that have the potential for extraction of more than one mineral type. The example in our area is gypsum underlying gravel (and possibly shale gas underlying both). It may be necessary to prioritise one type of mineral extraction over another. Risk assessment may be needed if different minerals are to be extracted simultaneously. Extraction of one type of mineral may sterilise reserves of another. Policy DM8 and associated text could be modified to encompass this.

3. Criticism of the Process of Consultation

- East Leake Parish Council has repeatedly responded to several consultations on the minerals plan in recent years, but at no time was this proposed quarry extension mentioned. The site allocation was not in the issues and options document.
- Site allocations were buried in the documentation and only came to the attention of the Parish Council three weeks before end of consultation period, when details of the exhibitions were sent out.

- Residents nearby have not been informed by Nottinghamshire County Council, and we are told that they do not intend to do so – this is unacceptable.
- The OS map used is out of date - new housing and the main East Leake playing fields are very close to the site but not shown.
- The designation “East Leake North” unhelpful – it is not north of East Leake. Residents near the site seeing the title have assumed it is located to the North of East Leake, and therefore not near them.

Appendix 1 – Letter from Resident

To Clerk to the Parish Council,

Thank you for your letter Ref. Extension to Gravel Pit/Quarry

There are two items I wish to bring to your attention.

1)-Close by the southern boundary is a pond/lake where towards the Eastern end there is a small island covered in trees in which is buried a historic stone arched bridge. My wife & I first came to live at 1 Mill Lane some 54 years ago & the lake was marsh land with the sheep wash brook running roughly east to west through the middle of the marsh & under the beautiful stone arched bridge. When the marsh was converted to a lake we fought a hard battle to save the bridge from being bulldozed by agreeing to it being buried but were not told that trees were going to be planted on the top of the island. If it is proposed to remove the island for whatever reason it must be dismantled with great care.

The stone bridge & Mill Lane are the remnants of the ancient road from East Leake to Loughborough & the bridge was the crossing point over the Sheep Wash brook. When Sir Julian Cairn built Stamford Hall he lowered the gradient of the Stamford road alongside so that a horse could pull a fully laden cart up the hill. Also around that time the new A60 road from Loughborough to Nottingham opened with a toll gate at what is now Rempstone & the villagers steadily migrated to the new site by the toll gate & finally The church of St Peters in the rushes was moved stone by stone to its present site as All Saints leaving the old village abandoned.

2)-Noise from the quarry, the original owners agreed to use electric pumps for noise reduction. Now the proposed new site is in fact nearer to us than the original site so we expect electric pumps to be used.

Yours sincerely,