

We refer to our response to the outline planning permission for this site (12/02173/OUT). We are disappointed that many of our concerns have not been addressed, yet could easily have been used to improve the scheme, at very little cost. We draw particular attention to the following:

1. The housing mix for the market element of the development in the plan consists entirely of 4 and 5 bedroom houses. This is in direct contravention of paragraph 50 of the NPPF¹ which states:
“To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:
 - plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community”

The villagers have expressed a strong view through the community plan consultation² that a mix of house sizes should be provided in the village by new developments. Interviews with Estate agents as part of research for the Neighbourhood plan (appended) also point to the need for a diversity of market housing in new developments to cater for the whole of the housing “ladder”. We urge, therefore, that developers be required to provide a mixture of homes for the market that reflects Rushcliffe Borough Council’s own assessment of need derived from projections of household types³:

To 2 bedrooms	19%
3 bedrooms	64%
4 bedrooms	16%
5+ bedrooms	1%

In addition, a diverse mix of home types within each of the categories should be provided.

2. No attempt has been made to link to the existing footpath immediately to the east of the site. As shown on the latest plan, the route via the existing footpath and Orchard Close into the adjacent “Trees” estate involves exiting the site, walking alongside a busy road, and up a flight of steps. Direct and level footpath access from the site could easily be provided, suitable for baby buggies and mobility scooters, allowing safe, pleasant and convenient access for the residents of the new development walking to the village. It would also give easy access to the new amenity space for residents of the trees estate. A cycle route could potentially be created.
3. Similarly, there is no means of reaching the rural footpath along the ridge west of the railway line from the most westerly part of the site. A public footpath within the site to the corner by the railway bridge, and a pavement across the bridge to the existing footpath would be a relatively low cost option for the developers to provide but would significantly improve the network of off-road footpaths for the village, avoiding the current difficult walking route along the road.

Note that this response is from the Neighbourhood Plan Project Team, and is offered in addition to the response of the Parish Council via its Planning Committee.

February 2014

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² <http://www.east-leake.co.uk/uploads/report-on-the-east-leake-community-survey.pdf>

³ Rushcliffe Borough Council - B line Housing Market Assessment Update, April 2012, and associated needs and lifecycle model - source, meeting with Phil Marshall, RBC, 23 May 2013

East Leake Neighbourhood Plan Group

Interview with William Pole B.Sc. (Hons) FNAEA and member of the RICS, of Hartleys Estate Agents, 11 Feb 2013

The discussion was to bring out any observations on the state of the housing market in East Leake, to help inform policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

East Leake is a popular village with good facilities and a community feel. Homes sell well if correctly priced. House prices are high relative to other areas and the village tends to be on the expensive side for first time buyers.

The biggest gap in the market is to provide a stepping stone for families between three bedroom semi detached homes (at about £145,000) and 4 bedroom detached homes (from £200,000 for the older properties, £230,000 for the Gotham Road estate) and the Mr Pole suggested that 4 bed semi detached houses with decent sized bedrooms could fill this gap, whilst providing the required density and profit margin for developers. With modern soundproofing disturbance from attached neighbours is less of an issue. An "exclusive" development of semi detached homes in Gotham has sold well.

Three bedroom semis in East Leake sell quickly if correctly priced, and achieve a higher price than in Loughborough. New build three bedroom semi detached houses tend to be targeted at young professional couples and have one large master bedroom and two very small rooms, so families with growing children very quickly need somewhere to move on.

The Rushcliffe estate has a good supply of market family homes at the cheaper end of the range, as very few are now let. Grants are needed to deal with the insulation and re-roofing, and this could be an avenue for the Neighbourhood Plan to pursue. Without roof replacement, in particular, it can be difficult to get a mortgage on these properties.

Bungalows are not seen as profitable by developers, due to more land being required to provide a given amount of accommodation. The supply of bungalows in East Leake seems to be about right for the demand at present. Over recent years the proportion being bought by young couples as opposed to older people has increased – now about 50%. The potential for conversion/extension is good. For older people bungalows need to be close to the village centre and not on a hill.

The retirement flats in Thurman Lodge have proved popular. Flats in Walnut Gardens and Osier Fields came onto the market just before prices came down and some sellers have had equity issues when trying to sell. Those with two large bedrooms do better than one large and one small. Many are let by private landlords.

We discussed tenure types. Shared ownership can work well. 100% rental housing association homes are needed for local people with family and/or work ties in the village. Mix of social and market housing can be problematic, and support/recourse is needed in cases where there are difficult neighbours.

East Leake Neighbourhood Plan Group

Interview with Melissa Hopson BSc (Hons) MRICS, of John German Estate Agents, 19 Feb 2013

The discussion was to bring out any observations on the state of the housing market in East Leake, to help inform policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The biggest demand in the village is for family housing – 3 and 4 bedroom detached houses. Families are attracted by the good range of local facilities and amenities, including schools, Leisure Centre, Heath Centre,

shops, dentist, not found in other villages such as Rempstone, Gotham, Wysall. 3 bedroom semi detached houses generally sell the most easily. The greatest lack in the housing stock is for homes for the first time buyer, i.e. for singles or couples at less than about £120,000.

Many buyers (and renters in particular) are moving within the local areas or have links here. The central location can be useful e.g. for couples where one person works in Nottingham, one towards Leicester. Rental properties find tenants quickly, with smaller homes being most in demand.

All types of homes in the village sell well, and all areas of the village, particularly nearer the centre, e.g. Potters Lane, Manor Farm Meadow, and the Brookfields/Northfields area. The Trees estate is more affordable and there are also buyers for the relatively inexpensive houses in the Rushcliffe Estate.

Any new developments should have a diverse mix of housing, and include provision for the lower end, e.g. 2 bedroom semi detached or town houses, although apartments do also sell. Amenities and infrastructure in the village must be developed to keep pace with new houses. There are various strategies for successfully mixing market and affordable housing, and this is an issue for specialist planners to give their attention to.

There is considerable demand for bungalows in the village, from residents wishing to downsize and waiting for the right bungalow to come onto the market. For older people, homes need to be close to the village centre, and a flat walk, for daily shopping etc. Any developments for older people further from the centre might benefit from their own shop, though the shoppers bus is a useful option. Thurman Lodge has proved popular and the apartments sell quickly if correctly priced. East Leake may not have the population to warrant a large retirement development, but there is probably demand for some sheltered bungalows with private outdoor spaces.

The shopping centre has a good, and improving, range of independent shops, cafes etc. Any future plans for the centre should encourage a diversity of more up-market shops.