

## East Leake Parish Council – response to 19/02205/FUL, Erection of 22 new dwellings, Land East Of Cornflower Way Balancing Ponds Costock Road East Leake

East Leake Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this application, reflecting the views of residents expressed in a public meeting held on 22 October.

### 1. Planning Policy - no further development at East Leake

East Leake already has planning permission for 1304 homes on greenfield sites around the village during this local plan period, over three times the “minimum 400” allocated in the Core Strategy. Local Plan part 2 has not allocated this site and states that it would be unacceptable to identify further land at East Leake for housing development over the plan period. Rushcliffe now has more than 5 years housing land supply.

### 2. Infrastructure Deficiencies

With this level of housing growth there has been little growth in infrastructure to cater for the additional homes and the large rehabilitation centre just outside the village at Stanford Hall. East Leake Neighbourhood Plan policy H1 stipulates that development over and above the minimum 400 homes will only be supported where it is demonstrated that infrastructure will be improved in time to serve the needs of the development.

- The Health Centre has been identified as severely under capacity and past end of life. A new building is needed. Feasibility studies have started, but it is unlikely that anything will be delivered within 5 years.
- The primary schools are full. There are plans to build a third primary school but planning is at a very early stage and there are no guarantees that the school will materialise.
- The secondary school needs to be expanded to cater for the housing already approved, and planning for this does not appear to have started.
- Severn Trent have realised that the existing sewerage systems do not have the capacity to serve the expanded village plus the rehabilitation centre. Feasibility studies etc have started to increase capacity but this will take many years.
- There are capacity issues with many of the junctions around East Leake that connect it to the main highway system, and also at the t-junction in the village centre. Further traffic out through Costock or the village centre will create delays and accidents.

### 3. Loss of countryside

This site cannot be considered infill. It is a green field beyond the edge of the built up area of East Leake, and therefore development here would be contrary to Policy 22 of Local Plan Part 2. From the entrance to Cornflower Way towards Costock the aspect is rural, with houses on Cornflower Way set well back from the road, behind balancing ponds and a carpark, all screened by vegetation. The opposite side of the road here is open fields. Approaching closer to the site, dense hedging and a large ash tree screen the Sports Pavilion, again with fields on the other side of the road. The proposed houses would be well forward of the Cornflower Way building line and highly visible from the road. Beyond the playing fields the road to Costock consists of fields with an occasional building.



#### 4. Reducing the Separation of East Leake and Costock

After extensive public consultation, the East Leake Neighbourhood plan adopted Nov 2015 identified in para 2.5.5 and policy H6(c) the importance of green field separation between the villages of Costock and East Leake. These are distinct and separate settlements. The open countryside along the road is vital for maintaining the separation and rural aspect of each of the communities, and has been eroded by various developments in the past few years. See aerial view from Google Maps and list below.



1. *14/01641/REM, Residential development of up to 150 dwellings with associated infrastructure; overspill car park for cricket and rugby club, Land To East Of Meeting House Close, Costock Road, East Leake (approved 16 Oct 2014, and now complete)*
2. *14/00427/FUL, Change of use and extension of agricultural buildings for retail and storage use in connection with relocation of existing Love and Piste business, including parking and access works, Brook Furlong Farm Costock Road East Leake Nottinghamshire LE12 6LY (Granted May 2014 and in use, now including café and kitchen/bathroom business.)*
3. *Due to diversification at Brook Furlong Farm there is increased business signage at the entrance to the drive to the farm, reducing the rural appearance here.*
4. *Barrington House – a growing business with various extensions to buildings in recent years, including 18/01113/FUL, 18/00330/FUL, 17/01161/FUL*
5. *12/01552/FUL, Single storey building to replace existing building on same footprint, for use as holiday let/educational use, The Elms Farm Leake Road Costock Nottinghamshire LE12 6XA*

The cumulative effect of these developments is to reduce the countryside settings of both Costock and East Leake and the green field separation between them. If approved, this proposed development would significantly worsen the situation. The vegetation along the road would need to be cleared to provide access and visibility splays, so the new houses, significantly closer to the road than those on Cornflower Way, would have a visual impact. The pavilion building would also become visible.

## 5. Flood Risk/Drainage Strategy/Sewerage

Building on land liable to flood is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan policy H6(e), policy 17 of Local Plan Part 2, and National Planning policy and guidance. It is claimed that the hydraulic modelling undertaken justifies redefining the flood zone boundaries but we note that there is no evidence as yet that this has been accepted by Environment Agency. The EA Flood Map has not been changed, and as it stands it would lead to difficulties for homeowners with mortgages and insurance.

The Design and Access Statement states that Costock Road acts as a natural flood barrier:

*The results of the detailed floodrisk assessment ... indicate the fact that Costock Road acts as a natural flood barrier*

Para 3.8 of the Flood Risk Assessment states:

*It appears that Costock Road acts as a topographical barrier to fluvial flows from the Kingston Brook...*

The phrase "appears that" here is much weaker than the "fact" stated in the Design and Access Statement. We can see no evidence provided that the road acts as an effective barrier so this cannot be considered a "fact". Has a detailed site survey been carried out of all possible pipes, culverts etc that could allow flood water from Kingston Brook to cross the road?

Policy 18 of the Local Plan Part 2 requires that drainage strategy should be identified at an early stage in the Design Process. The Flood Risk Assessment refers to a "Sustainable Drainage Statement", but this document does not appear to be included.

*"To mitigate the developments impact on the current runoff regime it is proposed to incorporate surface water attenuation and storage as part of the development proposals. Further information on the drainage approach is provided within an accompanying Sustainable Drainage Statement."*

The Design and Access Statement states:

*"The site is bounded by drainage ditches on all sides. Surface water generated by the development will make use of the ditches on the eastern and northern boundaries. The eastern ditch will be widened and replanted with native species. This will act as a 'linear balancing pond' to hold excessive amounts, which will then be fed slowly via a hydrabrace into the existing ditch network on the northern boundary. This system will not require a connection to the existing surface water sewer system, and as a result of its design will not add to flood risk in the village."*

Paragraphs 4.5 to 4.7 of the Flood Risk Assessment contain very little detail and as far as we can see there is not enough information about the design of the linear balancing pond and hydrabrace to demonstrate viability, nor any acceptance from the relevant authorities that some sort of overflow arrangement would not be needed. The impact of drainage design on the adjacent playing fields should specifically be assessed to ensure that there are no adverse impacts.

Appendix A contains photos of a flood event on 15 October 2019. This level of flooding is not unusual, happening every year or so with floodwater approaching close to houses on Stonebridge Drive and Costock Road. On this occasion the flood was caused by the brook alone – the balancing ponds on neighbouring estates were not full. A combination of such fluvial flooding and a flash flood could have much more severe impact. It is worth noting that there is considerable concern among residents about further building exacerbating the situation.

As yet there is no reply from Severn Trent re capacity in the sewerage system. It is known through the East Leake Growth Board meetings that the sewage treatment plant does not have the capacity for the homes already granted permission. That the holding tank in the centre of the village is inadequate is also well established, with regular overflows onto the road and children's play park when Kingston Brook floods (for photos, see Appendix A).

## 6. Access/transport

Vehicle access to the site would be close to a bend in the road, and the transport statement provided shows that the 30mph speed limit is significantly exceeded here. There are a number of access roads in a short stretch. Parking on the road and pavement on match days would restrict visibility at the junction and exacerbate the problems with vehicle movements. In order to provide the new entrance and visibility splays the hedge and trees would need to be cut back or removed, impacting visually on the green approach to the village as described in section 3 above. Para 6.8 states “A maximum of 13 two-way vehicle trips are expected at the site access junction during the peak periods” – this seems a very low estimate for 22 houses with 39 parking spaces. East Leake has high rates of car ownership.

The impact on traffic junctions in the surrounding area needs to be considered, particularly the Costock crossroads, the T-junction in the centre of East Leake, and the A6006 junctions (Loughborough Road, Leake Lane, Travels Hill, and Rempstone). Traffic surveys provided for other sites have shown these to be close to capacity, and in some cases over capacity. A cumulative study is needed, taking into account all the developments plus the DNRC at Stanford Hall and the planned 3000 homes South of Clifton.

Paragraph 4.15 of the Transport Statement is misleading in giving distances to the infrequent Soar Valley bus and 863 service which are completely impracticable for commuting, journeys to school and almost any other useful journey. The map on page 10 of the Design and Access Statement compounds this inaccuracy by showing these services as a “main bus route”. The distance to the closest regular and useful bus service, the No 1 to Nottingham/Loughborough, is about 600m from the entrance to the site, and a further 150m from the furthest house. The distance to the No 1 is over twice the desirable distance of 250m for urban areas. It is disingenuous in 4.14 to imply that the relevant standard should be the 800m maximum “rural” distance when East Leake is classified as a key settlement for sustainable development, and is not classed as rural for allocation of housing.

Pedestrian access to the site is compromised by the fact that there are no pavements into the entrance road. These should be provided, or perhaps a separate pedestrian access at the NW corner of the site by the ground source heat pump. The proposed footpath linking the Cornflower way Car Park to the sports pitches is discussed in the Design and Access Statement but not shown on most of the plans. There is no guarantee that this can be negotiated with adjacent landowners, and there are objections from residents of the Cornflower way estate. Lighting would need to be provided at either end of this path to improve safety at night. The sports ground is a secure site, so the gate at that end would need to be lockable and users of the Pavilion and Sports Fields would need to agree to undertake to unlock and lock it as needed.

## 7. Parking

Plots 3, 4 and 5 are 2-bed homes with only 1 parking space each and it is likely that this arrangement will cause contention for the three visitor spaces adjacent. Plots 6-16 have tandem spaces for 2 cars – we are finding elsewhere in the new developments that this can lead to additional parking on the road to avoid shuffling cars around. Plots 18-22 only have one parking space each. They are 3-bed homes and it is likely that some will have 2 or more cars. There are 3 visitor spaces between the 5 homes, and this arrangement is likely to cause misery for these residents. Any resulting parking on the road in this area will make it difficult for vehicles, including dustbin vans etc, to turn.

## 8. Housing Mix

The Design and Access statement says:

*“The proposed scheme only includes a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom homes, for a target market of first time buyers, small families and the elderly looking to downsize. The Neighbourhood Plan identified these groups as being*

*in the most need for suitable housing in the village. However many of the recent developments around East Leake have featured significant numbers of larger, detached properties. The proposal is designed to redress that imbalance.”*

The focus on smaller homes and recognition of the imbalance that has developed in the village is positive. Policy H3 has specific targets for the mix of market houses and the proposals as they stand almost conform to policy H3 if the 20% affordable housing target is to be met, i.e. 4.4 affordable homes. Assuming that 4 affordable will be agreed as opposed to 5, and that these will all be 2-bedroom:

House type	H3 requires	The application has
1-2 bedroom	Between 30% and 40%	7 market homes = 38.8% (11 total, less 4 affordable)
3 bedroom	Between 40% and 60%	11 = 61.1%
4 bedroom	Between 10% and 20%	0%
5+ bedroom	Between 0% and 5%	0%

We do not object to the lack of 4-bedroom homes, given the over emphasis on larger homes on other developments.

The last paragraph of policy H3 specifies a diversity of house types within the categories. We do not object to the fact that there are no detached homes, given the over provision elsewhere. It is regrettable that there are no bungalows or apartments. We would comment also that some of the neighbouring homes on the southern boundary are bungalows and two storey houses adjacent to them will be somewhat overbearing.

The Design and Access statement claims that the smaller homes cater for older residents seeking to downsize, but this is not substantiated. For example there is no assessment of the designs to show how they meet the requirements for accessible and adaptable buildings as detailed in the Lifetime Homes Standard or M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations. This is required by policy H5(b) of the Neighbourhood Plan, with discussion in para 2.4.8.

### **9. Other Issues, including Building Method, Ecological Report, and Environmental Considerations**

The modular construction method and energy performance of the homes is of interest, and could perhaps been seen as positive had this been a site allocated for development in the Local Plan. But in terms of climate change the impact of building any type of houses on this green field site, when no further housing is required at East Leake, is too great and unwarranted.

As far as we are aware Rushcliffe has expressed no views for or against this type of prefabricated building method. The Design and Access Statement identifies speed of build out as a benefit, but there will be negative impact on local employment during the construction phase and potential trade in village shops such as the bakery.

The large ash tree in the hedge by the road is not assessed in the ecology report. As described in Section 3 above this has a positive contribution to the green approach into the village, and screens the pavilion when travelling towards Costock. Loss of this tree and native hedge would be regrettable. The hedge should extend along the length of the ground source heat pump to screen it.

The Ecological Appraisal identifies ridge and furrow features in the field and despite the recommendations in 5.3.1 it is difficult to see how any of this important agricultural heritage feature could be preserved should the development go ahead.

Surveying for great crested newts has not taken place (see 3.4.2) and given the large populations in the area, including on the British Gypsum site, this is disappointing.

Proposals for wildflower planting are positive.

East Leake is on the flight path for East Midlands airport and no noise assessment has been provided. This is required by policy H4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Noise from the playing fields and pavilion adjacent also need to be assessed as these could have an impact on the residents of the new homes. It should be noted that there are plans to renovate the pavilion and extend its use into a Community Hub. Noise from social events, clubs etc to be held there could also cause disruption to neighbours. It would be better not to build close to such sources of noise.

On the subject of the sports fields, some form of boundary treatment would be needed to protect the properties from balls. To protect from the cricket pitch these would need to be high and careful design would be needed to prevent visual intrusion. The impact on bats and bird populations would need to be assessed.

Page 8 of the Design and Access statement states that the public open space would be managed in perpetuity through a management company to be formed and owned equally by the residents of the site. This is different from the approach taken at other sites, where a management company has been appointed, and the pros and cons of the different approaches need to be understood.

 <p data-bbox="212 658 721 689"><b>Sheep Plank Lane from Costock Road end</b></p>	 <p data-bbox="871 658 1380 689"><b>Sheep Plank Lane from Lantern Lane end</b></p>
 <p data-bbox="651 1473 940 1505"><b>Fields off Costock Road</b></p>	
 <p data-bbox="651 1473 940 1505"><b>Fields off Costock Road</b></p>	
 <p data-bbox="301 1939 632 1971"><b>Garden, Stonebridge Drive</b></p>	 <p data-bbox="994 1939 1259 1971"><b>Rear of Costock Road</b></p>



**Co-op Car Park**



**By Fire Station**



**Village Centre**



**Gotham Road Play Park**



**Sewage Overflowing from Storage Tank in Village Centre**



**Meadow Park**

