

12/01821/OUT Land off Lantern Lane, 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 that will inform the Neighbourhood Plan. This section of the survey is attached for information 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.

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...

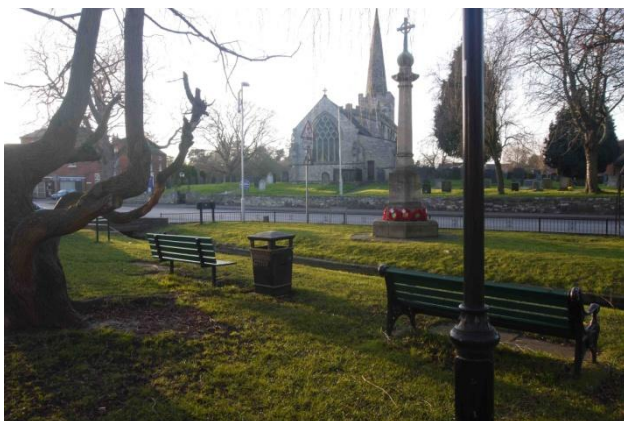


...surrounded by hills

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 LANTERN LANE PROPOSALS AGAINST BUILDING FOR LIFE CRITERIA

INTEGRATING INTO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Criteria	Neighbourhood Plan Group's Comments	Score
<p>1. <u>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>Not met. This is a major area of concern. This is an “inward looking cul-de-sac development” and it most certainly does not “contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood”.</p> <p>There is no connection with the neighbouring housing development, which includes a shop and has direct access onto the bus route. The major area of employment in East Leake is at the British Gypsum site. This is close as the crow flies, but there is no footpath/cyclepath to it from the top of the development.</p> <p>Conversely there is no convenient access to the new amenity area of Sharpley Hill for residents in neighbouring areas of housing.</p> <p>Furthermore the linkages within the development are poor, with cul de sacs and no pedestrian or cycle routes between them.</p>	Red
<p>2. <u>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>Partially met. The development is close to schools and the Leisure Centre. Additional school building is provided within the scheme, although having a split site across a busy road is far from ideal. Play space is included in the scheme, though there is no imaginative vision for this, and no management plan.</p> <p>The scheme is close to the Gotham Road recreation ground and Meadow Park, but there are no off-road pedestrian and cycle routes to enable children to get there safely.</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>There are no shops, pubs or cafés included in the scheme. The nearest existing shop involves a circuitous walk around the roads – there is no connecting footpath from the site.</p> <p>The footpath at the far side of the school, cited as a possible walking route to the centre of East Leake, suffers from heavy mud making walking and cycling difficult for much of the year.</p>	Amber
<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 reasonably close, though it should be noted that there are no convenient walking routes to the bus route from homes at the top end of the proposed development. The bus services have their limitations, and need to be improved, e.g. addition of a late evening bus from Loughborough. The development is close (as the crow flies) to the railway at Rushcliffe Halt, which runs some recreational services at present and has future potential for developing rail or tram services, but again 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. The proposed mix is for larger “family” homes, i.e. 246 x 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses, (though it should be noted that there is discrepancy between the various documents on this point). The requirement for East Leake residents, with an ageing community wishing to downsize, is for two bedroom bungalows, along with properties suitable for singles and couples which are the greatest growth areas of households in the Borough.</p> <p>There is nothing in the scheme that offers live/work possibilities.</p>	Red

	The tenure mix is not specified in the application. A strategy for this has yet to be developed for East Leake, having regard to the Borough's targets.	
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CREATING A PLACE

5. <u>Character:</u> Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?	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.	Red
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?	Not met in general - there is no vision coming through in the proposed scheme, though the proposals for Sharpley Hill do take into account the landscape/topography. No imaginative features or management plans have been identified from the documentation. The drainage improvements and storm water arrangements proposed seem utilitarian rather than grasping the opportunity to enhance the environment.	Amber
7. <u>Creating well defined streets and spaces:</u> Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well.	Not met. There is no indication (other than their different colour!) that the corner buildings have been designed to enhance streets or turn corners. They are not focal buildings, just houses on the comers. Numerous buildings have blank walls to the street. In short there is no indication that thought has been given to this.	Red
8. <u>Easy to find your way around:</u> Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?	Not met. There is no indication that any thought has been given to this either. The winding roads, series of identical cul de sacs, and connecting roads are somewhat unhelpful. The winding streets and planting obscure any viewpoints or markers. Buildings appear identical. Many building/garages are oriented sideways onto the streets.	Red

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. No parking appears to have been provided for the new classrooms, which will mean that the streets are used. On street parking is already a problem at school start and finish times, and this is likely to extend into the new roads. We have serious concerns for pedestrian safety and emergency service vehicle access.	Red

<p>11. <u>Public and private spaces:</u> Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?</p>	<p>The central footpath runs along backs of houses in places, so is poorly overlooked, as well as being screened by the hedge. However most other public areas are overlooked to some extent by housing. The proposed play space at the top of the site is a cause for concern in terms of safety, backing onto open ground. Nothing is included about street/footpath lighting or maintenance of vegetation, which could lead to dark, unsafe areas. No management plan is included, and details of planting are sketchy. Overall it appears that little thought has been given to this.</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>12. <u>External storage and amenity space:</u> Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?</p>	<p>Not met. No detail on this has been provided, other than a general statement that it will be considered later – there is no vision articulated.</p>	<p>Red</p>