

Elvaston Castle Masterplan FAQ's

1. What would it cost to park?

There would be a pay and display machine at the new car park. With similar charges to the current car park. Season tickets would still be available.

2. What would happen to the current car park?

The plan is to close the current car park when the new one opens. Some of the existing car park could be used for special event parking and we're going to consider expanding the current caravan site into some of the existing car park too.

3. Why not improve the current car park?

We have been advised by the National Trust and regeneration consultants to have a centrally located car park to provide easier access to the visitor facilities.

4. Would the new road have an impact on the Bridleways and other routes in the park?

The new access road would be designed so that it is clear that walkers, cyclist and horse riders are priority users where it crosses bridleways. If the new access road uses the South Avenue we would make sure the road is safe for all users until vehicles could be separated from other users.

A multi-user route along Bedford Drive would be sensitively designed as an attractive, peaceful and safe route for all users. It would be made clear to motorists that walkers, cyclists and horse riders are priority users.

A map of this suggestion is on the main consultation page.

5. Would people park in the village of Elvaston if the old car park closes?

The new facilities would provide much better access to the estate. We would discuss parking management and enforcement with our highways department. We would also work with local communities to make sure the improved access arrangements reduce traffic through the villages of Elvaston, Borrowash and Thulston.

6. Why can't you reopen the museum?

The museum buildings require substantial remedial works and research shows that the farm museum wouldn't generate the revenue needed to maintain and restore the buildings.

However the proposals for these buildings include public access, retail units, display areas and where possible, features of the former museum such as the Forge, which would be brought back into use.

7. Would I be able to visit the Castle?

Although there could be some residential use within the upper floors of the Castle and conferences and events taking place on the ground floor, access would still be offered to the most important parts of the Castle for tours and special events. Some parts of the ground floor could be open permanently to the public.

8. Would access to the courtyards be maintained?

Yes, but when there are special events taking place which require the Castle courtyard to be closed a new access route would take visitors directly to the north of this courtyard, through the new café to provide access to the park (see pages 14 and 15 of the Master Plan).

9. Why does the showground need to move?

The existing showground can remain very wet for long periods of time making it difficult for event organisers. This restricts the income that can be generated from the showground as organisers will consider alternative venues with less risk of being rained off or even flooded. The proposed location for the showground has better drainage which would mean that events could take place more often and be planned with more confidence. The site is also close to the proposed new car park whereas the current site would be difficult to access if the old car park is closed.

10. What would happen to the showground?

Despite problems caused by poor drainage on some parts of the current site, it still has a number of potential uses such as smaller events, rare breed grazing and equestrian use. Some of the events at Elvaston which take place in locations across the estate such as the Woodland Festival could also still use some of the showground space.

11. How would the proposed redevelopment be funded?

We hope that grant aid will cover much of the cost involved in the estate's regeneration but proceeds from land sales for enabling development provide an invaluable source of match funding to bring in more funds from grant bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

12. What is enabling development?

Enabling development is development such as housing that would bring public benefits such as funding repairs to at-risk historic buildings for example.

It is worth noting that enabling development proceeds can only be used for this purpose and no development is allowed until specified repairs (or other public benefits) are identified. If enabling development went ahead proceeds from the sale of land at Elvaston for housing would be re-invested in repairs to the historic buildings at the estate including the castle itself or other necessary infrastructure projects.

Enabling development is a last resort when all other funding options have been exhausted.

In any case, we would only sell the leasehold not the freehold which means we retain ownership of the land. This means that any purchaser will have to comply with the council's lease terms –such as the right for the council as freeholder to remove tenants who fail to properly maintain their property and surroundings or cause a nuisance to others.

13. Will this make it easier to build more houses?

No. We have identified three sites at Elvaston which may be suitable for development. These are at Home Farm, The Kennels and on the site of the Old Thatched Cottage.

Development of this type must be a last resort and the capital generated from any development must be used to support the restoration of a part of the estate where there are no other options available for funding. Any development would be sensitive to its surroundings and is only identified for sites where there have previously been houses and where there is currently no public access. With just a few more people living on the estate we believe that it would improve security and protection of the historic environment.

14. Why does Home Farm need to be redeveloped?

Home Farm is in a state of disrepair. Current planning legislation and practice would allow us to convert farm buildings into homes.

Any conversion would be carefully considered to make sure that the historic character of these buildings is retained. Across from the Home Farm buildings is an area of land that has been identified for enabling development.

15. Would I have to pay for admission to the estate?

The park would still be free to use. Some activities and facilities could potentially include an additional admission fee but access of the majority of the parkland will stay the same.

In the long term, a charge to access the restored formal gardens is being considered.

16. Would dogs still be welcome?

Yes, well-behaved dogs would still be welcome in the park and gardens but not inside the buildings.

17. Would I still be able to access all the parts of the park I can currently access?

If the proposals go ahead access to some areas of the park may need to be restricted for health and safety reasons while restoration takes place and management of sensitive natural habitats may create some changes.

18. Would any trees have to be cut down?

Trees in parkland such as Elvaston have varying lifespans and have to be managed by skilled professionals. The park would continue be managed to achieve a balance of effective access and best practice woodland management.

We would continue to work to improve the overall quality of the woodland environment over time in line with the vision and methods of the gardener, nurseryman and landscape gardener William Barron who worked and helped shape the estate for many years.

19. What would happen to the current equestrian activity on the site?

Whilst the existing location of the equestrian facilities may change, we believe that it is important to look at other opportunities across the site for equestrian activities and facilities as horses have been an important feature of the estate throughout its history. As it is likely that the historic stable buildings will need to be converted for more commercially sustainable use given their location and current poor condition, it will be desirable to consider other locations around the wider park where horse riding, training, pasture and livery facilities can be continued in more suitable countryside surroundings.

20. Would the cricket club close?

The cricket club is an important tenant and plays an important role in the local community. We're looking forward to continuing to work in partnership with the club on the estate.