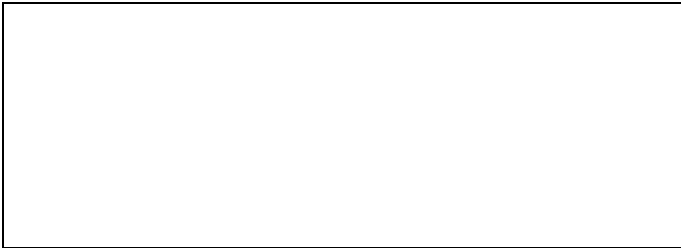




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Your Ref: 23/01496/DISC 23/01558/DISC 23/01493/REM 23/01586/REM
Our Ref: ATE/23/00163/XCOND
ATE/23/00162/XCOND
ATE/23/00156/RM
ATE/23/00153/RM
Date: 11 July 2023



Active Travel England Planning Response Detailed Response to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Suzanne Taylor, Cherwell District Council

Application Ref: 23/01496/DISC, 23/01558/DISC, 23/01493/REM,
23/01586/REM

Site Address: PROPOSED HIMLEY VILLAGE NORTH WEST BICESTER,
MIDDLETON STONEY ROAD, BICESTER, OX26 1RT

Description of development(s):

Discharge of Condition 8 (Site Wide Masterplan and Design Code) of 14/02121/OUT.
Discharge of Condition 9 (other uses area masterplan) of 14/02121/OUT.
Reserved matters application for access, layout, landscaping and scale pursuant to outline planning permission 14/02121/OUT.
Reserved matters application for the erection of 123 dwellings parking, landscaping and other associated infrastructure including the part discharge of conditions 12 (Building for Life 12), 13 (future climate risks statement), 14 (noise assessment), 16 (means of vehicular access), 17 (means of pedestrian/cycle links), 18 (Travel Plan) at Phase 2A.

Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:

- a. ~~**No Objection:** ATE has undertaken a detailed assessment of this application and is content with the submission.~~

- b. **Conditional approval:** ~~ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.~~
- c. **Deferral:** ATE is not currently in a position to support this application and requests further assessment, evidence, revisions and/or dialogue as set out in this response.
- d. **Refusal:** ~~ATE recommends that the application be refused for the reasons set out in this response.~~

1.0 Background

Active Travel England welcomes the opportunity to comment on the following applications for two discharge of condition (DOC) applications and two Reserved Matters (REM) applications pursuant to Outline planning permission 14/02121/OUT as listed below:

Discharge of Conditions: 23/01496/DISC

Discharge of Conditions: 23/01558/DISC

Reserved Matters: 23/01493/REM

Reserved Matters: 23/01586/REM

ATE understands that the site is subject to an outline planning permission for 1,700 residential dwellings and a mix of commercial, retail and community floorspace across approximately 24ha of agricultural land to the north of the Middleton Stoney Road (B4030) with all matters reserved including access.

The site is located to the west of Bicester and forms part of the wider North West Bicester eco-town area which is allocated for development as part of Policy Bicester 1 (North West Bicester Eco-Town) in the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (re-adopted December 2016). The Outline consent (known as "Himley Village") forms an integral part of the wider allocation which extends further north of the site to the north west of the existing settlement boundary of Bicester.

To date, ATE has not been involved in the Outline application pertaining to these Reserved Matters or planning conditions.

National policy and guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

104. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of... development proposals, so that:

c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;

110. In assessing... specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; [and]

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

112. ...applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas...;
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; [and]
- c) create places that... minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles...;

113. All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) provides guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure, while paragraph 14.3.1 identifies that new housing development provides a major opportunity to create new and improved cycle infrastructure.

Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking is the Government's cycling and walking plan for England. This sets the Government's vision for cycling and walking to be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030, while recognising that the planning system can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Inclusive mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians provides guidance on designing and improving the accessibility and inclusivity of public transport and pedestrian infrastructure

Active Design (Sport England, supported by Active Travel England and the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities) sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives. It states that through the NPPF, the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, places that prioritise activity, health and the characteristics that underpin active environments are encouraged and recommended.

2.0 Summary

Whilst it is acknowledged that some opportunities are limited due to the nature of these applications, there remains strong potential for the proposals to contribute more towards active travel, particularly as the permission was granted as outline only, with access, landscaping, and layout all being matters reserved for future determination.

The internal masterplan framework proposes the delivery of active travel routes and ambitious modal share targets for walking and cycling. Whilst many of the proposals are laudable, the site is currently isolated from existing amenities and is reliant on the delivery of supporting infrastructure to ensure it is sustainable. Steps should therefore be taken to secure key services and walking and cycling routes within appropriate timescales.

Securing potential future links will significantly increase opportunities for active travel. The current proposals will rely heavily on two vehicle accesses for both pedestrian and cycle access. It will be important to ensure future links come forward to guarantee site permeability for non car uses.

Further consideration is needed in relation to off site walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, whilst the mixed use neighbourhood centres should incorporate car free

principles as far as possible to encourage active travel movements that originate from within the site and further afield. This could be addressed by consolidating the requirements for parking, loading and servicing in one area of the site, which would result in a more efficient use of land and a much-improved public realm.

An assessment of each of the four applications has been undertaken using ATE's Planning Application Assessment Toolkit with opportunities identified for each application below. The Toolkit appraiser report has also been attached to this response.

3.0 Areas of Concern

23/01496/DISC - Discharge of Condition 8 (Site Wide Masterplan and Design Code) of 14/02121/OUT.

It is understood that the overall aim of the Masterplan and Design Code seeks to prioritise access for Non-Motorised Users (NMU's) within the Framework Plan as part of a coherent on-site network offering pedestrians and cyclists direct routes to key community destinations and services. ATE welcomes this approach and the steps taken by the applicant to secure these aims. To ensure these aspirations are realised, ATE have identified the following opportunities:

- There are currently two main accesses proposed into and out of the site from the B4030 which will also serve as the primary routes in and out for pedestrians and cyclists. Several additional future potential links have been identified but will not come forward as part of these proposals. To guarantee active travel permeability, connections 3 and 4 shown on Figure 3 Proposed Vehicular Access Points of Design Code Part 4 (23/01496/DISC) should be secured by condition and should not be reliant on vehicular routes coming forward. This would allow for pedestrian and cycle access to newly developed employment areas and other key services by avoiding busy roads.
- Segregated cycle routes through the site are supported and will significantly enhance the safety of active travel movements. Raised tables across junctions are a positive design feature and will ensure pedestrian and cycle priority at junctions in accordance with paragraph 7.6.10 and Figure 7.10 of Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 and the National Planning Policy Framework Para 112 a).
- The need to carefully manage kerbside activities will be required in order to minimise conflict with people walking, wheeling and cycling and consideration of crossing requirements should also be made.
- The proposed 'ped cycle access point' in the south east corner of the masterplan is welcomed and should be secured by condition.
- A 20mph speed limit on the Spine Road(s) is welcomed and the road design should incorporate traffic calming or other design features to achieve this in accordance with 2.2 Primary Street - Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guide and Paras 7.6.3 and 7.6.5 of LTN 1.20.

23/01558/DISC - Discharge of Condition 9 (other uses area masterplan) of 14/02121/OUT.

It is understood that these parcels of land will contain a range of commercial and community uses alongside a care home. ATE have identified the following opportunities:

- The two mixed-use neighbourhood centres each contain vehicular routes along the entirety of the length of this parcel of the development. This appears to prioritise ease of access by motor vehicles ahead of the needs of more vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclists and those using pushchairs or mobility aids. The primary vehicle route in turn serves numerous car parking areas (with a dedicated parking area for each unit). Consequently, the layout maximises the extent of carriageway and hardstanding construction when the provision for parking and deliveries could result in an improved outcome were it reduced through its containment in a single area rather than throughout the site. ATE considers that the proposed arrangement will not only fail to deliver quality placemaking but also serve to encourage and embed car reliance and therefore unsustainable travel behaviours from within and outside of the site.
- The neighbourhood centres, due to their proximity to a significant new population should wherever possible be following the principles of the surrounding 'Eco-Town' and prioritising movement by active and sustainable means. This would help create a liveable and vibrant community by encouraging NMUs and contribute towards the site allocation targets of 50% of all trips originating from the site to be made by non-car modes. This approach would be in accordance with NPPF Para 92 a) which seeks to 'promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.'
- Appropriate crossings should be constructed for residents accessing the mixed use neighbourhood centre from the nearby care home, especially for users of wheelchairs, in line with Section 4 of Inclusive Mobility.

23/01493/REM - Reserved matters application for access, layout, landscaping and scale pursuant to outline planning permission 14/02121/OUT

The above application concerns the design of a number of internal primary and secondary streets along with the partial discharge of conditions 16 (means of vehicular access), 17 (means of pedestrian/cycle links) for Phase 1B. ATE has the following comments:

S278 Offsite Highway Works B4030 Middleton Stoney Road:

ATE has reviewed the submitted plans and considers there is strong potential to create a segregated walking and cycling route along B4030 Middleton Stoney Road in favour of the shared route as proposed.

The B4030 experiences high traffic volumes and speed (40mph) with the SATURN output for the 2024 Initial Mitigation scenario giving AM and PM peak flows of 3070 and 3213 respectively (pg 17 Himley Village Transport Assessment Addendum / October 2016) and Figure 5 of Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) suggesting daily flows of 8,400 along Middleton Stoney Road up to Howes Lane/Vandee Drive roundabout. Moreover, the nature of the Sites alignment and lack of active frontage is likely to encourage speeds above the current limit. Whilst the proposed shared walking and cycling route is welcomed, a segregated route would significantly increase the legibility, safety and therefore attractiveness for those considering whether to walk, wheel and cycle, in line with Figure 4.1 of LTN 1/20. If these recommendations are taken forward then white line segregation is not recommended and where cycle tracks are provided at the same level as a pedestrian route, they should be clearly designed and marked as cycle tracks, in accordance with Para 6.5.3 of LTN 1/20.

In relation to the proposed shared use route on drawing - *s278 Offsite Highway Works, Pedestrian / Cycle Link, General Arrangement Sheet 3*, the stretch of proposed route immediately adjacent to the carriageway does not appear to be in compliance with LTN 1/20. Table 6-1 on pg54, which would suggest a desirable minimum separation from the carriageway (40mph) of one metre.

Further justification is required in relation to proposed site access junctions. If more than 2,500 vehicles per day are forecast to cross the main pedestrian and cycle flows and these remain untreated, then potential critical issues could arise. It appears this may be the case, but confirmation is required and further consideration of pedestrian and cycle movements at these locations is needed, with Figure 10.13 of LTN1/20 providing examples of how this arrangement could be managed.

Pedestrian access to the westbound bus stop on B4030 Middle Stoney Road and uncontrolled crossing via a pedestrian refuge is proposed on the plans. This arrangement could result in potential critical issues related to pedestrians being required to use uncontrolled crossings on 'busy' roads. The suitability of this type of provision should be reconsidered and preferably improved with a signalised crossing in view of the nature of the road and the likely increase in movements generated by surrounding growth.

The final area of concern is the wider connectivity of the site and the lack of provision that is made for active travel at the roundabout junction between Howes Lane, Vandee Drive and Middle Stoney Road. Potential critical issues exist in relation to traffic volumes, uncontrolled crossings and in relation to the width of shared provision. In light of the trip generation for active modes forecast in the Transport Assessment (Table 8.15), this level of provision is unlikely to be safe or attractive.

In terms of lighting, streets, footways and cycle ways should be adequately lit to provide safety and security for all users. It is therefore welcomed that the proposed Plan s278 and the s38 Infrastructure Lighting Layout includes this provision.

23/01586/REM Reserved matters application for the erection of 123 dwellings parking, landscaping and other associated infrastructure including the part discharge of conditions 12 (Building for Life 12), 13 (future climate risks statement), 14 (noise assessment), 16 (means of vehicular access), 17 (means of pedestrian/cycle links), 18 (Travel Plan) at Phase 2A.

It is noted that the Mixed Use Framework Plan associated with 23/01496/DISC includes a proposed pedestrian / cycleway access to the residential development from the mixed use neighbourhood centre. It is important that this is secured and accessible for wheelchair users in accordance with Inclusive Mobility guidance.

Residential cycle parking is proposed as being LTN 1/20 compliant, however the number of cycle parking spaces has not been provided. ATE would encourage the applicant to provide policy compliant levels for all residential dwellings in accordance with Table 5.1 Cycle Parking Standards for residential development of the Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

Further, cycle parking spaces should be easily accessible in accordance with Para 106 d) of the NPPF. Sheds in rear gardens which require the cycle to be brought through the dwelling are inconvenient and should be avoided in favour of secure shelters to the front of dwellings which allow easy access to the active travel network.

The LPA should ensure proposed cycle parking is sufficient for larger bikes and e-bikes, including provision for charging. It is recommended that at least 5 per cent of all spaces should be capable of accommodating non-standard bicycles, in accordance with Table 11.1/Table 11.2 of LTN 1/20.

The target for the allocation site is that 50% of all trips originating from the site will be made by non-car modes. The modal share targets within the Travel Plan will need to be closely monitored and reviewed and the developer will need to assess whether these are achieved along with implementing measures to address failures.

4.0 Next Steps

We request that these recommendations are provided to the LPA case officer and forwarded to the agent and applicant. ATE would be content to review further submitted information to help address the above identified deficiencies, with a view to providing a further response and recommended wording for planning conditions and obligations.