



Active
Travel
England

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Your Ref: 25/01768/HYBRID
Our Ref: ATE/25/01172/HYB
Date: 11 September 2025

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Cherwell District Council

Application Ref: 25/01768/HYBRID

Site Address: LAND AT GRAVEN HILL, LONDON ROAD, BICESTER, OX26 6XJ

Description of development: Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved apart from access) for residential development and an extra care facility and supporting infrastructure, a pub/restaurant and associated parking areas, access, allotments and public open space; and Full planning permission for residential development and associated parking areas, access and public open space

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 (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this application.

It is understood that the site *“is located entirely within an existing local plan allocation for residential-led development under Policy Bicester 2, and which previously benefited from the grant of outline planning permission for the same (now expired)”* (Planning Statement, paragraph 1.1).

To date, ATE has not been involved in any pre-application discussions or planning applications relating to this site. However, ATE has recently submitted a response to planning application 25/01820/HYBRID – Alchester Parklands, West of Ploughley Road – to which a deferral response was issued.

ATE has reviewed the application against the criteria set out in our updated Planning Assessment Toolkit, national planning policy, and active travel design guidance.

Whilst this application is significant in size and scale, opportunities to influence matters relating to the principle of residential development in this location are limited, given planning history and the site’s status within the adopted local plan. This response therefore primarily relates to matters of trip generation and travel planning, off-site contributions and design/internal layout.

Following our review, several key issues require further consideration in light of changes in national policy and guidance. ATE is therefore issuing a deferral response pending further analysis, as outlined below.

2.0 Summary

1. Trip Generation Analysis and Travel Plan Targets

The Transport Assessment (TA) does not provide specific trip generation estimates for walking and cycling. Instead, it focuses on vehicle trip generation using TRICS data (cars, taxis, LGVs) for residential, care home, and restaurant uses. The applicant should provide estimates for walking, cycling and public transport as part of the trip generation assessment. Whilst data appears in Appendix E of the TA, no obvious analysis has been undertaken. The assessment should consider both peak and all-day trips to fully understand demand throughout the day.

Travel Plan

The submitted Travel Plan states that *“The Travel Plan would also aim to increase walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport trips by a combined 10%.”*

The applicant should provide specific targets broken down across each sustainable mode, rather than attributing a combined value. A ‘vision-led’ or ‘decide and provide’ approach, as set out in Oxfordshire County Council guidance, should be adopted to establish robust, forward-looking targets aligned with the revised NPPF. This should consider improvements to the active travel network both as part of the proposals and in the wider development context.

2. Off-site Active Travel Infrastructure Improvements

The application does not appear to propose major new off-site active travel infrastructure. Instead, it will deliver on-site walking and cycling measures and connect into the off-site network that was delivered or funded under earlier stages, rather than proposing new off-site works.

Given changes in national and local planning policy and guidance since the *Original Consented Development*, and because the lapse of reserved matters has required a new hybrid application, there is justification in reassessing whether the mitigation package remains sufficient considering the current development uplift and updated policy framework. It is not clear whether such an assessment has been undertaken by the applicant. ATE would therefore encourage dialogue with the Highway Authority to consider these matters further.

3. Internal Layout and Approach to Active Travel Infrastructure

Shared-use paths (i.e. unsegregated routes for both pedestrians and cyclists) should be avoided along all new streets unless they fall within the limited acceptable situations set out in LTN 1/20 (see paragraph 6.5.6 and section 1.6 (2)). ATE does not consider this development to meet those criteria, as it will form part of an urban residential area. It is noted that segregated cycle tracks on both sides of the highway, with separate pedestrian facilities, have already been delivered as part of earlier phases (notably on Graven Hill Road). This design is supported by ATE for key and spine roads with high volumes of traffic and should be replicated throughout. Following review of the submitted proposals, the following clarifications are required:

Design Code

- Page 39 *Active Travel*: The key refers to “Dedicated and shared cycle route”. The applicant should clarify whether this indicates segregated cycle tracks or shared-use facilities.

Village Centre

- Page 59 *Village Centre*: The table indicates a 2m footway on one side and a 3m shared footway/cycleway on the other, and a 2m cycleway on one side with a 3m shared footway/cycleway on the other.
- Page 50 *Design and Access Statement*: Shows 2m footways and 2m cycleways on both sides of the Village Centre.

The two documents do not appear to correlate. ATE supports the design approach within the Design and Access Statement and does not support the inclusion of 3m shared footway/cycleways in this location.

Tree-Lined Avenue

The approaches set out in both the DAS and Design Code appear consistent and are supported.

Circular Railway East (CRE) and West (CRW)

The Design Code notes primary differences in walking and cycling infrastructure between CRE and CRW. It includes design justifications on page 38, but it is still unclear why shared-use facilities are being proposed on CRW. Clarification is required.

Permeability

There is an opportunity to provide an additional pedestrian/cycle connection to the western side of the Local Area of Play adjacent to plot 1336.

4. Cycle Parking

It is understood that cycle parking throughout the scheme will align with the Oxfordshire County Council Cycling Design Standards and LTN 1/20. This is welcome.

It is recommended that cycle parking provision should:

- Be secure, convenient, and accessible; and
- For residential dwellings, be provided at the front of properties and delivered directly by the developer.

3.0 Next Steps

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