



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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Matt Jedruch, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

**Application Ref:** 25/00197/REM

**Site Address:** LAND SOUTH OF, PUMPING STATION, ASTON FLAMVILLE ROAD, BURBAGE, LE10 3AA

**Description of development:** Reserved Matters submission for the appearance, layout and scale of development for 238 no. dwellings (southern parcel) pursuant to outline planning permission 23/00673/OUT.

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 Assessment

Thank you for consulting Active Travel England (ATE) on the reserved matters application which follows the granting of outline consent for a related application 23/00673/OUT, with access approved. This reserved matters for appearance layout, scale, application covers phase 1 of the development, which forms the southern portion of the site granted outline approval. ATE note that the application is accompanied by a Building for a Health Life Assessment (BHLA) to meet the requirements of condition 8 from the outline consent. This

is of particular interest to ATE given the links to creating active healthy neighbourhoods that support active travel.

It is welcome that the BHIA helps to explain further the layout plan (Integrated Neighbourhoods 1- 4) including that cycling and walking permeability towards Dorchester road and Aston Flamville road, described as 'edge to edge' permeability inline with the guidance for producing such assessments. However on our scaling the plans of these vital connections indicate that the widths is in the region of 2.1m. Whilst this would allow for two wheelers to pass (Inclusive Mobility DfT 2022), this is not wide enough to meet the requirements of Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN1/20, which requires a minimum of 3m for genuine shared use pedestrian and cycle provision. Therefore, ATE would find that it would be incorrect to identify this as green on the traffic light BHL assessment, in that edge of edge permeability for active modes is not fully possible.

Crossing the Aston Flamville Road is crucial to help site wider permeability, but as ATE pointed out at the outline stage specific well designed crossings for cyclists are not included. Cycles must use the road via the roundabout, which is the least safe junction option for cyclists, or dismount and use the not wide enough pedestrian crossing arm at the wide splayed part of the highway. Wheelers and pedestrians will be forced on occasion to share too narrow footways and crossing refuges with cyclists, for those who feel unsafe using the carriageway. There is no dedicated internal cycle routing to help guide cyclists towards the most appropriate way to approach to cross the Aston Flamville Road.

Active Travel England made the following comments on the outline, which do not appear to have been considered in designing the layout plans now submitted at RM stage.

*"Site permeability could be enhanced further by using the established public right of ways adjacent to the site and making sure connections to them follow the shortest and most efficient route to enable access for onward journeys and facilities. An off road pedestrian route within the site masterplan is welcome but appropriate surfacing is vital to ensure it will support wheelers and pushchairs and be lit. Lighting and surfacing are crucial where the route will facilitate the shared path connection with Dorchester Road."* Will all internal routes be lit, in particular the key connections at the edge of the site?

The 'deformed grid structure' described is interesting, but this layout proposed is not strictly a grid, given cul de sacs and private drives tend to dominant to edges of the development. A grid structure is useful to create alternative parallel routes, but this layout does not easily provide for these. Improved permeability but must connect up cul de sacs and drives to help create alternative quieter, low trafficked routes more likely to have street lighting, rather than isolated routes round the periphery of the development. Please see chapter 4 - Manual for streets (2007) in particular figures 4.4 a) and b) to contrast. The more recent National Model Design Code - part 2, has similar useful guidance on street layout for movement and close regard must also be had to this. The BHL guidance explicitly states that continuous streets are superior, and private drives frustrate pedestrian and cycle movements. Extensive use of these would score a red, as would distributor roads with limited frontage access served by private drives. The latter pattern exists to the north of this southern phase as it meets Aston Flamville Road. Safe, direct, coherent, comfortable, attractive cycling connections through the site for cyclists originating in the phase 2 development is also an important consideration.

ATE would suggest the filtered permeability described in the assessment by private drives and footways is not as connected as possible and relies on all modes using the same routes in all but a few cases. It is not a grid pattern, save for footway only connections around the ditches. Rat running would be unlikely to be a problem necessary to alleviate

as the development does not provide any through route for traffic or onsite trip destinations sufficient to encourage outside trips in its current form.

Section 2, walking, cycling and public transport - as stated previously at outline stage: *"The site lies 1.4km plus using established walking, wheeling and cycling routes from key amenities, such as the local primary schools, shops and services. This in principle would not comply with the ATE toolkit assessment which sets 400m and 800m thresholds for short trips that would incentivise the use of active modes. "*

Trip distances for schools, public transport nodes and services by active modes are very significant. This means the internal layout and future travel plan must work very hard to help support and promote active modes from the doorstep of new homes. Active modes should arguably have more than equal priority in the layout and exclusive routes reserved for them. ATE welcome a metalled surface for walking, will this extend to the edges or the site and what about similar priorities for cycling to meet the core principles of LTN 1/20?

POS areas are on the edge of the development and will not support play on the way for the vast majority of the development. There is not yet an obvious inviting play street or play strategy to invite a continuous child focused route through the site to destinations such as play areas or off-site routes. Benches in play areas are welcome, but what about providing these on desire lines throughout the development for those less able to rest as part of a longer active journey. This would also support a better Healthy streets assessment in section 9. If a linear park was developed along a desire line, this could also help serve this purpose.

Private drives on the edges of the layout do not provide for well designed streets and spaces, nor do they create active frontages as suggested in section 7. They do not promote overlooking of the walking routes designed as isolated in depth and away from the built footprints. Without a clear way finding strategy and enhanced security measures it is likely active modes will stick to the main motor vehicle spine road and not other walking only routes. Failing to plan cycling routes means cycles have to mix with traffic or use walking only routes to the detriment of pedestrians and wheelers. There are no obvious crossings, and the design does not obviously support the movement hierarchy. The street hierarchy described in part 8, is also not obvious and needs more definition. The 'linear park' is also a not obvious feature, unless this is around the ditches, but other than footways these do not seem to be 'parks'.

Part 10, parking. Only homes with garages provide cycle parking, those that do not are expected to simply store cycles in rear gardens with no protection from the weather or security. This does not holistically support modal shift. Cycling offers a cheaper alternative to car ownership and can give real transport independence for those less well off. This is all the more reason to provide cycle parking for those without garages. Garden sheds can be very vulnerable to theft, being a light weight timber construction, and not overlooked in rear gardens. ATE would like to see cycle parking planned in to the built footprint of dwellings in future as they do in the Netherlands, for instance making use of under stairs cupboard stores accessed externally. LTN 1/20 recommends cycle parking at one space per bedroom. For housing aimed at families, space to park cycles for the whole family is important.

It is noted that condition 25 on the outline requires the submission of a full travel plan prior to occupation. ATE noted issues with the framework plan in our original response on the outline. It is unfortunate that a full travel plan has not yet been submitted to help assist scrutiny of the layout and proposals such as cycle parking, to understand whether the

design will support the as yet undefined modal shift ambitions and whether there are barriers to overcome that could be designed out at this stage.

## 2.0 Summary

It is very much welcome that the Local Planning Authority has required the submission of the Building for a Healthy Life assessment. In reviewing this assessment against the proposed plans, it is clear the design must be improved. Active Travel England would not agree that all criteria of the assessment should score in the 'green' category at this stage. There are some improvements required to make this a better more fully connected development that supports all active modes from the doorstep, which the criteria within the BHL assessment highlights very clearly.

Active Travel England recommend that any decision on this application is deferred and revisions sought to improve the layout and edge to edge connection quality to better support walkers, wheelers and cyclists.

## 3.0 National Policy and Guidance

Since making our response on the original outline approval, the Government has published a new NPPF in December 2024 and the new paragraph numbers important to active travel are as follows.

109. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve: a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities; b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places; e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use;

...

115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, ...

117. Within this context, applications for development should: a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between

pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; ...

Not referred to previously but still important is section 8 Promoting Health and Safe Communities which includes;

96 Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) 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;
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Cycling Walking Investment Strategy DfT - this is a key strategy document first published in 2017 by Department for Transport to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys or part of a longer journey. This approach strongly aligns with the long held policy direction in the NPPF that the planning system should actively manage growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling by focusing on sustainable locations. The first CWIS in 2017 was updated in 2023 with an ambitious target that 50% of journeys within urban areas should be by active modes by 2030.