



Active
Travel
England

Active Travel England
West Offices
Station Rise
York
YO1 6GA
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Your Ref: DM/23/2866
Our Ref: ATE/23/00933/OUT
Date: 22 December 2023

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Mid Sussex District Council

Application Ref: DM/23/2866

Site Address: Land East Of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield, West Sussex

Description of development: Outline planning application (All matters reserved except for access) for the redevelopment of land to the east of Ansty to create a new Garden Community, comprising of the erection of up to 1,450 homes (including 30% affordable housing), up to 90 residential care units (C2 class), a primary school, a SEND school, health hub, sports facilities including all weather hockey pitches and tennis centre, allotments, retail, community and employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes, open spaces, and landscaping

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 the above Outline application (all matters reserved except access) for the redevelopment of land to the east of Ansty to create a new Garden Community, comprising of the erection of up to 1,450 homes up to 90no. residential care (C2 units), a primary school, new Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) school, sports facilities including all weather hockey pitches and tennis centre, allotments, retail, community and employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes, open spaces, and landscaping.

The proposed site (98.75 ha) is located in the Mid Sussex, between Ansty immediately to the west, Cuckfield approximately 1 km (0.6 miles) to the north, and Haywards Heath approximately 2 km (1.2 miles) to the east.

It is noted that the proposed development site is not allocated for development through the adopted Mid-Sussex District Council (MSDC) development plan (2014 – 2031), but it is being actively promoted to MSDC for inclusion in the further consultation stages of the emerging Local (District Plan) 2021-2039.

2.0 Summary

The northern and north-western edges of the development site are bound by the A272, while the B2036 abuts the south-western boundary, which also is adjacent to several dwellings in the village of Anstey. The site, known as 'Anstey Garden Community' (AGC) is approximately 2km West of Haywards Heath, the largest settlement in Mid-Sussex, with the other large town of Burgess Hill approximately 4 km (2.5 miles) to the south of the site. In terms of non-vehicular transport links, both of these settlements benefit from railway stations which connect West Sussex to Brighton 15km to the South and towards Greater London to the North.

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Cuckfield Road at the north-western corner of the site. ATE notes that it is crucial the proposed development demonstrates a holistic, integrated approach towards active travel and the synchronicity between active travel and existing and enhanced public transport services both within and outside of the proposed development.

The applicant has proposed three new points of vehicular access, with two via a roundabout junction from the A272 on the Northern and Western edges, and a third access on the South-Western edge onto the B2036 Harvest Hill. There are ten locations where access to the site can be made via active travel modes. These include the vehicular access points but also a newly proposed signalised crossing point over the A272 and via the various Public Rights of Way (ProW) which pass through the site and can connect it with the village of Ansty and other routes. It is also noted that along with the amenities (retail, community services etc.) that Anstey has a retail offering and a few other small business, along with the bus services between Haywards Heath and Brighton.

The proposed development includes a clear hierarchy of roads, with a primary road circling through the site inclusive of a 3 to 4.5m shared foot/cycle way on one site and a 2m footway on the other as indicated on page 28 of the Framework Travel Plan (FTP) Access & Movement parameter plan on Page 48 of the submitted Design & Access Statement (DAS) and detailed in part in the Cycle Improvement Plan (drawing 2207280-SK05 in FTP Appendix A.

It is vital that as an outline application that the necessary infrastructure is planned and embedded from the outset, so that the 'AGC' becomes as a place which provides excellent opportunities to walk, wheel and cycle in line with the objectives of the Design and Access Statement (DAS) which pledges in its Vision (page 4) how *"sustainable movement will be at the forefront of the transport strategy, where walking and cycling come first and the private car becomes obsolete"*. Therefore, in order for this ambition to come to fruition, the specification of details must be determined as soon as is practicable, such as the necessary confirmation/agreement regarding the details of mobility hubs. These are necessary so that the future residents (and existing residents of Ansty) and visitors to this development will benefit from attractive and high-quality infrastructure from the outset to enable and embed a choice of sustainable travel options in line with the government's aim to make walking, wheeling, and cycling the first natural choice for local journeys.

3.0 National Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 states:

108. 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;
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

109. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable.

114. 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;

116. ...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...;

117. 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. More specifically relevant to this application is paragraph 11.7 – *Workplace Facilities for Cycle Parking* identifies the potential for travel behaviour change in workplaces through the provision of appropriate facilities.

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. Active Travel England's responsibilities for walking also extend to "wheeling," such as the use of wheelchairs (self-propelled or powered) and mobility scooters.

A key expectation of Gear Change is to ensure the delivery of cycling infrastructure in accordance with the following principles:

- Separation from volume traffic
- Separation from pedestrians
- Cycles treated as vehicles, not pedestrians
- Isolated stretches of good provision are of little value
- Routes must feel direct, logical, and intuitively understandable
- Avoiding cosmetic alterations
- Barriers should be avoided

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.

4.0 Opportunities

The proposed development includes a number of attributes which demonstrate its potential to successfully facilitate walking, wheeling, and cycling, and maximise its access to amenities/reasonable flat topography. The FTP, DAS, Illustrative Masterplan, and other drawings demonstrate a degree of intent from the applicant to ensure that this development will from the outset allow residents to consider active travel for both recreational and short journeys. The most pertinent of these include:

- A proposed segregated 3 to 4.5 metre shared foot/cycle way and a two 2-metre footway which will comprise main road, along with the installation of bus stops to connect with local bus services will be integrated into the development.
- Various Active Travel Mobility Hubs are proposed (with one hub to also facilitate Ev charging and 4 smaller hubs to include active travel infrastructure). Indications of their locations are shown on Drawing Number D3012-FAB-OO-XX-DR-Y-O36 (FTP – Appendix) and examples of the various possible hubs are shown on Drawings 2207280-SK06 & 2207280-SK01 (Drawings appendix) of FTP. It is noted that the applicant has stated that they will design these in accordance with LTN 1-20 and ‘The Design Process – Mobility Hubs realised from Como UK’
- Consideration that the large number of Public Rights of Way (ProW) which cross the site can (with enhancements) be inclusive of all active travel users, both for recreational and utility purposes (and connect with the larger settlements such as Haywards Heath, with major public transport provision)

In terms of general site layout and its components, one of the most prominent aspects of the site is the fact that the proposed development also includes primary and SEND schools, which along with the care home and community centre are located in the Western side of the masterplan, close to the North-West access point with the A272. Consequently, a significantly large proportion of the development’s future school students, and others should be able to walk, wheel or cycle to school and to access the site’s amenities along a safe and attractive environment, by taking advantage of the multiple natural desire lines between the site via the enhancement of the PRoWs.

5.0 Areas of Concern

At this stage there are various details necessary for ATE to make an overall definitive assessment of the proposed development. These are as follows:

Although ATE appreciates that the application is of Outline status, this is arguably more important than any subsequent applications in defining the orientation and connectivity of the wider development. As an outline application, these proposals will set key principles and resultant travel patterns and trends for which there will be extremely limited scope to revisit or revise at the reserved matters stage or thereafter, and at which point the site is most likely to fragment into a series of separate component planning applications focusing solely on the internal layout bound by the red line in each case.

Details required are as follows:

1: Multi-modal trip generation and assignment

In line with National Planning Policy Guidance, ATE requires that an outcomes-based approach be used to undertake the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the walking and cycling movements generated by the application sites, together with an assessment of the quality of connectivity to the surrounding area by non-motorised users. A multi-modal daily trip generation assessment and assignment should therefore be presented, based not simply on exiting unsustainable travel patterns and behaviours, but the outcomes the applicant has pledged to realise in its DAS. This is necessary to enable ATE to use its 'Route Check Tool' to assess designs in terms of their suitability regarding the identification of any critical issues and scores for Active Travel service and placemaking.

2: Active Travel Infrastructure Requirements

It is crucial that the infrastructure requirements set out below (and particularly those relating to the major access road) are secured at the outline stage so that they are embedded within the proposed development. Only through this can the excellent outcomes pledged by the applicant regarding active travel uphold the intention to 'enable maximum sustainability of the site' (DAS, p.48).

(a) Internal Layout Connectivity

- The provision of precise and detailed information of the recommended junction design treatments at the proposed roundabouts located on the site's three nominated access points. This is in addition to the drawings submitted as the 'cycle route improvement plan' (Drawing: 2207280-SK05 in the attached Travel Plan drawings section). This includes a consideration of potential future collaboration and

subsequent contributions (e.g.S106/S278) to be negotiated. In the submission of these designs ATE will apply the Junction Assessment Tool as included in LTN 1-20 to assess the design's suitability.

- Design details of the active travel infrastructure to be incorporated into all of the PRoWs. These include, but are not exhaustive to:
 - o Details of the proposed upgrades to the footpaths (para, 4.12, FTP, p.29) and inclusion of cycling facilities as per LTN 1-20.
 - o Details of the signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing on the eastern arm of the northern access roundabout and the 2m footway and its extent (para, 4.14, FTP, p.29)
 - o The improvements to the bridleway between the proposed site and Tyler Green to the East of the site (via Copyhold Lane) ...This is also needed for external network provision.
- Details of all other crossings required internally for the proposed development and confirmation of materials, lighting, and other supporting infrastructure such as seating.
- More precise details of how the applicant will accentuate the permeability and street layout of the site for not only the above major access points but internally. This includes demonstration of where opportunities for paths to link cul-de-sacs exist; technical details of junctions; Active Travel facilities at bus stops; and ensuring recreational routes through the open space are safe, fit for all active purposes and considerate of all road users as per LTN 1-20 and Inclusive Mobility. ATE requests that this (and other opportunities to improve permeability) are forwarded by the applicant for further review.
- The location of the amenities provided and overall design of both the proposed mobility hubs and mini-mobility hubs and ensure that the number and type of cycle parking is in accordance with LTN 1-20. While the reference material of examples the applicant has provided in the FTP are welcomed and likely to be suitable, specific scheme details are necessary for review.
- Details of the active travel infrastructure at the proposed school, community services and retail sites – also to ensure that the numbers proposed are consistent with the guidance pertained within LTN 1-20 e.g., a space per 8 car parking spaces for shops and retail (FTP p.24) is not consistent with Table 11.1 of LTN 1-20 (p. 12).
- Details of the other schemes which will support active and sustainable travel such as the scale of both the cycle hire and car hire scheme.
- Cycle Parking - While the applicant has suggested that cycle parking will be in accordance with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) guidance for residential

cycle parking (FTP p.23) it states that most parking will be accommodated within properties or internally. Parking for flats/apartments needs to be detailed, including the location of such provision. Also, for active travel to be a prominent way of people making short journeys e.g., to the schools, local shops and services, the applicant is advised to indicate the location of dedicated cycle parking spaces for all components of the proposed site including short-stay visitor cycle parking in accordance with Chapter 11 of LTN 1-20.

(b). External Active Travel Linkages

Connection between PRow and external networks - The improvements to the bridleway between the proposed site and Tyler Green to the East of the site (via Copyhold Lane). This link dissects the entire development and would provide an outstanding route which would connect the site to the Western site of Haywards Heath (and therefore access the Train Stations in the township). It is also noted that this link is congruent with cycle route 'A' of the preferred cycle routes as per the Mid Sussex Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) from 2021 (Figure 6.18, p. 78).

3: Residential Travel Plan (TP) and future School Travel Plans (STPs).

A comprehensive and highly ambitious approach towards achieving high is required for the entire application which forecasts the level of active travel trips to be generated. The applicant has clearly considered active travel modes throughout the application, for example, stating its intention to provide a 'comprehensive walking, cycling and public transport network' (DAS p.52). However, the indicative targets of a 3% reduction within the first 3 years of occupation and 5% within 5 years (FTP. P.40) without any baseline data does not suggest a development with active travel movement at its priority. These and targets outlined in a future STP need to be revised.

Furthermore, with the positioning of the school/development centre, near the A272, it is vital from the outset that these amenities are accessed via sustainable means, and that from the outset the development strives to demonstrate best practice active travel infrastructure for its future residents and visitors to use.

6.0 Next Steps

ATE requests that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) shares these recommendations with the applicant and their agents and welcomes further dialogue and details between all parties.

Following further submission(s), ATE would be content to review further submitted information to help address the above identified deficiencies with a view to providing a recommendation for potential future infrastructure and funding, subject to receiving this information.