



Active
Travel
England

Active Travel England Standing Advice Note: Active travel and sustainable development



June 2024



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Active Travel England Standing Advice

Note: Active travel and sustainable development

Published: June 2024

This guidance will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This advice note has been prepared by Active Travel England (ATE) to help support design and transport consultants when preparing a development proposal, and local highway and planning authorities in their role as consultees and decision makers for planning applications. It is specifically intended for developments outside of London, with a separate advice note prepared for schemes within the administrative area of Greater London.
- 1.2 Upon receipt of a planning application consultation, ATE will undertake a triage process to determine whether this will be formally assessed by its casework team. In circumstances where ATE is experiencing a high volume of consultations, this advice note will be provided to local planning authorities (LPAs) where development proposals only marginally exceed the consultation thresholds set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2023. ATE may also consider that there is limited value in providing a detailed assessment for some consultations; for example, developments with minimal trip rates or applications made under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act (to vary or remove a previous planning condition) where the design and layout of the development has already been approved. In such instances, or whenever provided, this advice note will also represent ATE's formal response.
- 1.3 The subsequent paragraphs in this advice note will set out ATE's recommendation for how consultants should consider active travel in the preparation of applications and how LPAs should proceed to assess an application where standing advice is offered.

The government's ambition for walking, wheeling and cycling in England

- 1.4 The government's ambition is for England to be a great walking and cycling nation, supporting a shift in the way people across England think about undertaking short journeys within towns and cities. The aim is for walking, wheeling (trips made by wheelchair and mobility scooters) and cycling to be seen as the most convenient, desirable and affordable way to travel.

- 1.5 [The second walking and cycling investment strategy](#) (CWIS2) sets out objectives to boost overall levels of walking, wheeling and cycling across England, with the aim that 50% of all journeys in towns and cities should be by active modes by 2030. [ATE's Framework Document](#) also requires the agency to facilitate an increase in active travel to enable the 50% target to be met.
- 1.6 Aligned to these publications, there are numerous national policy and guidance documents that set out how the planning system and the delivery of sustainable development can help meet the government's active travel objectives, which include:
- [The National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), with particular regard to paragraphs 8, 74, 87-90, 128-130, and chapters 8, 9 and 12;
 - [National Design Guide](#);
 - [National Model Design Code](#);
 - [Planning Practice Guidance](#);
 - [Active Design](#);
 - [Buses in Urban Developments](#);
 - [Designing for Walking](#);
 - [DfT Circular 01/2022: Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development](#);
 - [Inclusive Mobility](#);
 - [Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle infrastructure design](#) (LTN 1/20);
 - [Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus user priority](#) (LTN 1/24);
 - [Manual for Streets](#);
 - [Manual for Streets 2](#);
 - [PAS 6463: Design for the Mind](#);
 - [Streets for a Healthy Life](#); and
 - [Streets for All](#).
- 1.7 The above list of documents is not exhaustive and will be kept under review by ATE.

Planning Application Assessment Toolkit

- 1.8 ATE has produced a [Planning Application Assessment Toolkit](#) that helps users to assemble evidence and assess the active travel merits – walking, wheeling, and cycling – of a development proposal. ATE encourage design and transport consultants to use the toolkit and submit a completed version with future planning application submissions. Local authority officers (planning and highways) are urged to use the toolkit in their assessment of planning applications.
- 1.9 ATE published the first version of the toolkit on 1st June 2023 alongside its commencement as a new statutory consultee. This comprised 31 criteria with text explaining how each could be assessed as a ‘pass’ or a ‘fail’. Upon review of this and in response to feedback, ATE has simplified the toolkit such that there are now only 10 assessment criteria, while the new rating system better reflects the range of outcomes that are possible from each assessment. Where new development proposals have been prepared using the original toolkit, ATE encourage this to be included in application documents.
- 1.10 As shown in the image below, the ‘user input’ sheet on the updated toolkit comprises six columns. The cells in the first three columns contain pre-populated text identifying the 10 assessment criteria, a brief description of each criterion and the common shortfalls found in planning application submissions to date. The cells in the fourth column allow the appraiser to apply a rating (exemplar, pass, condition/obligation to make acceptable, concern, critical issue or not applicable) against each criterion, while the cells in the fifth and sixth columns enable comments and relevant local policies and guidance to be entered.

Criterion	Description	Common Shortfalls	Rating	Appraiser Comments	Local Policy & Guidance
1. Trip generation and engagement	Does the application appropriately forecast all key trips to, from and within the site by walking, wheeling and cycling?	Source data is not representative of the proposed development, is out-of-date or is confined to commuting journeys only. Forecasted trip generation is limited to motor vehicle traffic or peak hours only. Future year forecasts do not realise the potential of the development to support a greater number of walking, wheeling and cycling journeys or do not align with the government's vision in Clear Change (or any adopted local targets that half of all journeys in towns and cities shall be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030).	Pass	Comprehensiveness of data used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips.	Local Plan policies T1, T2, T3
2. Active travel route audit	Has an appropriate assessment on the design and accessibility of walking and cycling routes in the locality of the site been provided?	Local pedestrian and cycling routes are very identified in application documents by their location, with no assessment provided on whether these are safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities (paragraph 52 of the National Design Guide) or otherwise, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive (core design principles in LTN 1/20). Applications that include new dwellings have not demonstrated how local schools and colleges will be accessed by active travel modes. Qualitative analysis to inform any necessary improvements to the design and accessibility of key routes does not include maps, photographs and comments nor has regard to the following guidance, tools and plans in the assessment of key routes: - Pedestrian Mobility (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10) and Sections 5.2, 6.7, 8.1, 9.3, 6.4 and 9.7 (as appropriate) - PAS 6813: Design for the Mind (Sections 6.2, 6.2.3, 6.4, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.7 and 8.1.12) - The LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design including Appendix A: Cycling Level of Service Tool, and Appendix B: Junction Assessment Tool) - The government's Walking Route Audit Tool, and - Any adopted or emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).	Concern	Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips. Clarity of assumptions used to forecast walking and cycling trips.	Local Plan policies T1, T2, T3

Figure 1: User Input sheet template

1.11 The information entered in the user input sheet will be captured within the Assessment Report table in the ‘**appraiser report**’ sheet, in which pre-populated national policies and guidance will supplement any local policies and guidance entered by the appraiser. The appraiser report sheet also invites the completion of relevant details of the development being assessed as shown overleaf.

1.12 ATE encourage LPAs to include the completion of the toolkit as a requirement for submission in their local validation checklists where a Transport Assessment is required and/or where ATE would be a statutory consultee.

Active Travel England		Active Travel England Planning Application Assessment Toolkit Appraiser Report	
Site address		Land south of A38	
Local authority reference		V/2024/0271	
ATE reference		ATE/00176/OUT	
Local planning authority		Ashfield	
Local highway authority		Nottinghamshire	
Completed by		Sam Rawlings	
Date (DD/MM/YY)		Wednesday, 1 May 2024	
Application type		Outline planning permission	
Summary of proposal		Outline planning application for 780 homes, primary school, local centre and associated infrastructure	
Model version		2.0	
Assessment Report			
Criterion	Rating	Appraiser Comments	Relevant Policy & Guidance
1. Trip generation and assignment	Pass	<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla eu rutrum erat. Duis a lacus metus. Suspendisse rhoncus interdum odio eu dictum. Nunc vestibulum bibendum ornare. Nulla tincidunt dictum ex a mattis. Vestibulum odio mauris, sodales et dictum commodo, tincidunt ac nulla. Maecenas dignissim, nunc a mattis pharetra, eros urna feugiat tellus, sit amet lacinia urna arcu quis nisi.</p> <p>Duis gravida purus et lobortis interdum. Vestibulum tempor diam eu dolor rutrum, blandit euismod tellus congue. Suspendisse venenatis in tortor non tincidunt. Maecenas luctus diam est, sed efficitur felis blandit a. Nullam lacus velit, congue nec maximus sit amet, fringilla in libero.</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework: 108, 114, 117; Planning Policy Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements; LTN 1/20: 14.3.6; ; Local Plan policies T1, T2, T3</p>
2. Active travel route audit	Concern	<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla eu rutrum erat. Duis a lacus metus. Suspendisse rhoncus interdum odio eu dictum. Nunc vestibulum bibendum ornare. Nulla tincidunt dictum ex a mattis. Vestibulum odio mauris, sodales et dictum commodo, tincidunt ac nulla. Maecenas dignissim, nunc a mattis pharetra, eros urna feugiat tellus, sit amet lacinia urna arcu quis nisi.</p> <p>Duis gravida purus et lobortis interdum. Vestibulum tempor diam eu dolor rutrum, blandit euismod tellus congue. Suspendisse venenatis in tortor non tincidunt. Maecenas luctus diam est, sed efficitur felis blandit a. Nullam lacus velit, congue nec maximus sit amet, fringilla in libero.</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework: 8, 74, 87, 96, 97, 108, 112, 114, 116; National Design Guide: 81, 82, 83, 119; National Model Design Code: 59i-ii, 64iv-vi (Part 1); M.1.ii, M.2, U.3 (Part 2); Planning Practice Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements; Active Design (Sport England): Principles 2, 3; Designing for Walking (CHT); Inclusive Mobility; LTN 1/20; PAS 6463; ; Local Plan policies T1, T2, T3</p>

Figure 2: Appraiser Report sheet template

2. Active travel assessment considerations

2.1 ATE recognises that the toolkit may not be completed by local authority officers in some instances. Where this applies, ATE has provided a summary of the toolkit criteria in paragraphs 2.2 – 2.22 of this advice note and local planning and highway authorities are encouraged to consider this when assessing relevant proposals at pre-application and application stage.

Trip generation and assignment (toolkit criterion 1)

2.2 In order to assess the opportunities for active travel within new developments, Transport Assessments should forecast the likely volume and distribution of all day pedestrian (walking and wheeling) and cycling trips to, from and within the application site. Key to this exercise will be reliable source data, but trip forecasting for future years should also align with the national target (or any adopted local targets) that half of all journeys in towns and cities shall be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030.

This information should be used to inform the design of the scheme, the cumulative impact on the existing active travel network, and travel plan targets to embed active travel from the outset.

Active travel route audit (toolkit criterion 2)

- 2.3 The Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements chapter of the Planning Practice Guidance states that “*measures to improve the accessibility of the location (such as provision/enhancement of nearby footpath and cycle path linkages) where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms*” should be considered when formulating Transport Assessments.
- 2.4 ATE advise that a qualitative analysis of local pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure should be presented to inform any necessary improvements that would be compliant with current design standards. This should include maps, photographs and comments that have regard to the following national guidance and tools in the assessment of key routes:
- Inclusive Mobility (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 15; and Sections 5.2, 5.7, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.7 as appropriate);
 - PAS 6463: Design for the Mind (Sections 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 6.4, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.7 and 11.12);
 - LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design (including Appendix A: Cycling Level of Service Tool; and Appendix B: Junction Assessment Tool);
 - the government’s Walking Route Audit Tool; and
 - any adopted or emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Pedestrian access to local amenities (toolkit criterion 3)

- 2.5 A mix of local amenities should be located within an 800m walking and wheeling distance (using well-designed routes) of all residential properties or staff entrances for workplace facilities. Trip lengths to key amenities should be derived from isochrone maps using an appropriate point within the application site, rather than straight-line distances from site boundaries or main access points.
- 2.6 Footpaths/ways to local amenities should conform to the National Design Guide standards of being safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities, which includes but is not limited to routes that:
- have a minimum width of 2m, with limited pinch points no less than 1.5m;
 - are step-free;
 - have a smooth, even surface;
 - have seating at regular intervals;
 - are uncluttered;
 - have good natural surveillance and clear lines of sight;

- have street lighting;
- have wayfinding; and
- have crossing points suitable for the speed and traffic flow of the road(s).

Cycling accessibility (toolkit criterion 4)

- 2.7 Off-site cycling infrastructure to a range of local amenities, and town centres, railway stations, employment areas and the National Cycle Network as appropriate, should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive in line with the five core design principles and geometric requirements in LTN 1/20 (see Sections 4.2 and 5).
- 2.8 The development should not be reliant on shared use routes in full or intermittently, which conflicts with the government's clear position in paragraph 1.6.1 (2) of LTN 1/20 that cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. Where on-road provision would be utilised, there should be sufficient protection from motor traffic in accordance with the suitability and segregation standards in LTN 1/20 (see Figure 4.1 and Section 6).

Access to public transport (toolkit criterion 5)

- 2.9 Most buildings within the application site should be within 400m of a high-frequency bus stop or 800m of a rail/light station or tram stop, with appropriate facilities. Local bus stops should have good natural surveillance and provide seating, lighting, shelter, real-time passenger information and raised bus boarders or specialist kerbs. Local rail stations should provide cycle parking, including spaces for non-standard cycles. Footpaths/ways to public transport nodes should conform to the design standards identified in paragraph 2.6 of this advice note.

Off-site transport contributions (toolkit criterion 6)

- 2.10 In consideration of the above, the application documents should set out a package of any necessary, directly related and proportionate off-site infrastructure that is to be delivered and/or funded. The application should also identify the mechanism to secure identified improvements and the trigger point(s) for delivery or payment.

Site permeability (toolkit criterion 7)

- 2.11 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework and suite of national design guidance as set out in paragraph 1.6 of this advice note, new developments must prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. As such, opportunities to maximise accessibility for active travel modes should have regard to the following considerations:
- the development should provide / safeguard pedestrian and cycling connections to neighbouring sites including future phases of development;
 - routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be at least as direct – and preferably more direct – than the equivalent by car;

- internal routes should be fully accessible or have adjacent accessible alternatives (e.g. ramps alongside steps or bound paths next to unbound paths);
- appropriate and frequent crossings should be proposed (see Inclusive Mobility Sections 4.10-4.11, PAS 6463 Section 7.6.2, LTN 1/20 Table 10-2, Manual for Streets Section 6.3 and Manual for Streets 2 Section 9.3);
- pedestrians and cyclists should be prioritised at side road crossing points (see LTN 1/20 Figure 10.13);
- priority junctions should have radii that minimise the need for pedestrians to deviate from their desire line (see Manual for Streets Sections 6.3-6.4 and Manual for Streets 2 Section 9.4);
- there should be no red/zero scores when applying the Junction Assessment Tool in LTN 1/20;
- signalised junctions should have pedestrian aspects on all arms;
- where cyclists would mix with motor vehicles, lane widths of between 3.2m and 3.9m should not be proposed (paragraph 7.2.5 of LTN 1/20 identifies that such widths allow motor vehicles to drive alongside a cyclist without a safety margin for their comfort and protection);
- there should be safe and well signed transitions for cyclists when moving between cycleways on and off the carriageway; and
- cycleways within commercial sites should be continuous through to cycle parking areas.

2.12 Alongside this, shared use routes for pedestrians and cyclists should only be proposed where these meet the limited situations listed in paragraph 6.5.6 of LTN 1/20. Where shared use routes are acceptable, their widths should be at least 3m (<300 cyclists per hour) or 4.5m elsewhere, as per Table 6-3 of LTN 1/20.

Placemaking (toolkit criterion 8)

2.13 The design of streets should encourage social interaction and create attractive, safe and accessible open spaces that would support an active life for everyone. This may include opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure / street trees, shared space residential streets (such as appropriately designed home-zones, mews and culs-de-sac), equipped play facilities, seating at regular intervals and clear lines of sight to assist with orientation (including measures to prevent inconsiderate parking).

2.14 The overall design approach should have regard to personal and highway safety concerns, including:

- streets, public transport nodes and other public spaces should benefit from appropriate levels of natural surveillance and lighting;

- the development should not include ‘blind-spots’, sharp turns or high-sided boundary treatments;
- the development should provide continuous and legible routes, and be supported by an effective wayfinding strategy; and
- residential or local streets should discourage traffic movements through the site and be designed for a 20mph speed limit (see Manual for Streets Section 7.4 for guidance on achieving this).

2.15 There should be an appropriate provision of well-located, on-site amenities to support the quantum of development proposed. For larger residential-led developments, evidence should be provided that the applicant has utilised local authority pupil yield data (or the Department for Education’s Pupil Yield Dashboard in the absence of such) to inform the need for new schools and early years settings.

2.16 For outline planning applications it is advised that an appropriate design code is included with the submission and secured by condition where appropriate.

Cycle parking and trip-end facilities (toolkit criterion 9)

2.17 Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with up-to-date local standards, or Section 11 of LTN 1/20 in the absence of such. This includes the quality of provision as well as the quantum, with details of accessibility, parking types and dimensions, security arrangements and lighting required as appropriate. Highly accessible cycle parking is essential for people with sensory and/or information processing differences and disabled cyclists who may be unable to walk very far or navigate a change in levels.

2.18 For workplaces, public buildings (including those used for leisure and recreation) larger retail developments and other developments with communal parking:

- internal cycle stores should be accessible from building frontages, be step-free and require passing through no more than two sets of doors;
- a proportion of cycle parking (typically 5%) should be provided for non-standard cycles to accommodate people with mobility impairments, in accordance with paragraph 11.3.2 of LTN 1/20 (Table 11-2 also advises on bay lengths and access aisle widths for larger cycles using Sheffield stands); and
- high-quality facilities including showers, lockers, changing rooms and drying areas are provided for cyclists in non-residential settings (see Section 11.7 of LTN 1/20, BREEAM guidance and any local standards).

2.19 The quantum and quality of the cycle parking and trip-end facilities proposed should align with travel plan targets for cycling and application objectives to deliver a sustainable form of development.

Travel planning (toolkit criterion 10)

2.20 Paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan. ATE consider that in most instances this should comprise a 'full' travel plan to include clear targets and measures to ensure that these can be achieved. A 'framework' travel plan is generally only appropriate for commercial developments where the end user is unknown, while an 'interim' travel plan can be acceptable where the split of uses is not yet confirmed.

2.21 Where the appropriate travel plan has been submitted:

- targets for active travel mode share should be ambitious and align with the national target (or any adopted local targets) that half of all journeys in towns and cities shall be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030;
- mode share targets should be set for the end of each phase (where identifiable) and extend to five years beyond the final occupation of the development;
- the requirements of disabled people have not been appropriately considered;
- targets should relate to all uses within the application site;
- this should provide sufficient detail on the active travel and public transport infrastructure to be provided or improved (both on and off-site) and how its use will be embedded by initiatives and incentives to be secured through planning conditions and obligations; and
- this should contain details of effective and influential actions to be taken if targets are not met, with the intention for these to be secured and monitored (if triggered) through planning conditions and obligations.

Decision-making

2.22 LPAs should use this guidance routinely in the assessment of planning applications affording it due weight in deliberations. The guidance reflects ATE's status as a statutory consultee in the planning system. Notwithstanding, the overarching National Planning Policy Framework and national design guidance identified in paragraph 1.6 of this advice note provides a strong context for embedding active travel infrastructure and measures within the design of new development and should be considered as early as possible in the planning process.

