



Active
Travel
England

Active Travel England and Transport for London Standing Advice Note: Planning applications in London



June 2024



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This guidance will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed.

1. Introduction

1.1 This standing advice relates to all applications submitted to local planning authorities in Greater London that meet the thresholds for referral to Active Travel England (ATE) under legislation that took effect from 1 June 2023.¹ It has been developed jointly by ATE and Transport for London (TfL) to provide clarity and certainty to applicants and to the London local planning authorities (LPAs) who will oversee the process. It is intended to prevent unnecessary duplication of work, while still fulfilling the role of the two organisations in promoting and supporting active travel through the planning process. The appendix provides a list of minimum requirements that will need to be met by all applications. However, in most cases TfL will require additional further plans, details or assessment that extend beyond active travel to fulfil its statutory duties as the strategic transport authority for London.

Background

1.2 From 1 June 2023, ATE became a statutory consultee on certain planning applications, as listed below. This will help to ensure that when new developments are being considered, the opportunity to build in active travel routes is maximised. To that end, local planning authorities are required to consult ATE on planning applications where developments meet the following minimum thresholds as set out in planning legislation:

- 150 dwellings (houses or flats);
- 7,500m² non-residential floorspace; or
- Site having an area of 5 hectares or more.

General advice

1.3 All planning applications in Greater London that meet the thresholds for referral to ATE will need to demonstrate that they meet national design standards and are consistent with the Mayor's and TfL's policies, priorities and guidance as set out in the appendix. Most planning applications that are referred to ATE will also meet the criteria for referral to the Mayor of London. As part of this process, TfL already provides detailed advice on active travel and other transport issues which are included in the Mayor's stage 1 and stage 2 planning reports. TfL also offers a comprehensive pre-application advice service on transport issues.

1. See the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2023.

1.4 The process of referral of planning applications to the Mayor of London remains in place. Detailed advice on active travel which will be issued by ATE for the rest of England will, in London, continue to be prepared by TfL. Local authorities in Greater London are still statutorily required to consult ATE on applications that exceed the thresholds set out in paragraph 1.2; however, at the current time ATE intend to issue this standing advice note in response to London consultations unless otherwise agreed by TfL. Consequently, to ensure that active travel issues are addressed in the initial planning application, applicants are encouraged to take advantage of TfL's pre application advice services. Details of how to apply are available at [Pre-application services](#).

Process

1.5 The process for submitting applications is as follows:

- **Pre-Application** – For all applications meeting the thresholds for referral to ATE and/or the Mayor of London, advice should be sought from TfL at an early stage through TfL's pre-application advice service. The timing of the request should allow advice to be incorporated in development proposals before they are submitted to the relevant LPA.
- **Submission of Application** – When the application is submitted to the LPA they will refer the application to the GLA where this is required under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008, and to ATE where it meets their criteria for referral. TfL will receive automatic notification of all referrals to the GLA. ATE will notify TfL of all Greater London planning referrals they receive, because some applications may not fall within the criteria for referral to the Mayor, e.g. sites with non-residential floorspace exceeding 7,500 m² or sites larger than 5 hectares that are consistent with the Local Plan site allocation and do not exceed height thresholds. ATE will issue this standing advice note within the statutory consultation period.
- **Assessment of Application** – Further engagement might be needed in resolving outstanding issues. This is likely to fall outside the initial consultation period, but all issues should be resolved before the planning application is considered by the planning committee at the LPA. Where details are not available to address all active travel issues or to ensure standards are met, the response may request that planning conditions are attached to a planning application requiring further consultation when details are submitted. These will be dealt with under the existing protocols for applications that are sent to TfL as a statutory consultee by a London LPA.

Targets and measures

- 1.6 ATE is an executive agency that has been set up to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for everyday trips. An overarching target of 50 per cent of trips in towns and cities in England being walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 has been set by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 1.7 TfL is working with stakeholders towards achieving the Mayor of London's target of 80 per cent of trips in London by public transport, walking or cycling by 2041, as set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy and London Plan. Targets for individual London boroughs are set out in their agreed Local Implementation Plans.
- 1.8 To achieve these targets, new development will need to set an exemplary standard that prioritises active travel. New development can embed positive forms of travel behaviour from the outset if it is located and designed around active travel, including provision of off-site improvements where appropriate. Experience in London has shown that availability of car parking is a key determinant of travel choices. Car-free and car-lite developments are strongly encouraged by the London Plan. This is of equal importance to the provision of high-quality infrastructure that will support active travel.

2. Active travel assessment considerations

Relevant planning guidance

- 2.1 TfL assesses planning applications based on compliance with [London Plan](#) policies and the approach set out in the [Mayor's Transport Strategy](#). London Plan Guidance on [Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling](#) is also a material consideration. TfL has issued relevant guidance on a range of topics including [Streetscape Guidance](#), [London Cycling Design Standards \(LCDS\)](#), [Planning for Walking Toolkit](#) as well as advice on how to carry out [Transport Assessments](#), [Active Travel Zone \(ATZ\) Assessments](#) and the content of [Travel Plans](#).
- 2.2 As part of the Transport Assessment process, measures should be put forward that support [Vision Zero](#) and the [Healthy Streets Approach](#) and contribute towards delivery of the Mayor's targets for mode share. The ATZ report should include practical measures to address the deficiencies identified in the assessment. TfL's [Strategic Cycling Analysis](#) and [Strategic Walking Analysis](#) should be used to inform improvements to the cycling and walking networks, filling in gaps and providing connections to strategic routes including [TfL Cycleways](#), the [National Cycle Network](#) and the [Walk London Network](#). Although the main focus is likely to be on functional active travel routes which connect people to shops, services and public transport, improvements to leisure routes connecting green spaces and waterways may also be appropriate.

Healthy Streets

- 2.3 Policy T2 of the London Plan sets out the [Healthy Streets Approach](#). The design of new developments should adopt the Healthy Streets Approach. It should also be adopted for any highways or access improvements that are needed to support a new development, including those that extend beyond the site.

Design of active travel infrastructure

- 2.4 In designing active travel infrastructure, issues of personal safety and security need to be considered from the outset. Routes for walking, wheeling and cycling should be safe to use, and be perceived as safe to use, by all people at all times. Ensuring that people with protected characteristics can walk, wheel or cycle in safety and comfort is particularly important and fundamental to creating an inclusive public realm. This will include going beyond the provision of basic infrastructure to consider the quality of public spaces and the wider urban realm, as well as issues such as lighting, natural surveillance, legibility, signposting, education and training.
- 2.5 Designers need to be sensitive to differences in the way people use and perceive the public realm and should aim to design out or minimise the effects of barriers to active travel. An environment dominated by vehicles (whether stationary or moving), severance and barriers to movement, traffic noise and pollution, inappropriate planting and areas that are poorly maintained or subject to anti-social behaviour can all be deterrents to active travel. Provision of dropped kerbs, appropriate paving and avoidance of pavement blockages or obstructions to movement, all need to be considered.

Shared space

- 2.6 Proposals for shared spaces or shared surfaces that include vehicle access will need to be carefully considered to ensure that any risks to more vulnerable users are designed out or minimised. The acceptability of shared paths for walking and cycling will need to take into account expected usage and proposed widths. Demarcation of shared spaces through the use of kerbs, marking, colouring or use of different materials may be required. Future maintenance and standards for adoption by the local highways authority will also need to be considered. It is likely that a Road Safety Audit will need to be carried out to assess whether a shared space is appropriate and contributes to the Mayor's Vision Zero objective.

Active travel routes

- 2.7 An Active Travel Zone Assessment should be submitted alongside the Transport Assessment. This should identify and assess key routes to all major trip attractors according to [TfL guidance](#) and should consider evening/night-time use and the safety of particular groups including women, young and older people, as well as daytime travel. It should consider the needs of all people who are walking, wheeling or cycling, including those travelling short distances as part of a longer journey, for example to access public transport. It should also consider the potential for, and barriers to, linked trips by walking, wheeling and cycling. Wayfinding and clear signage will need to be in place. Places to rest or break a journey may be particularly important for younger or older people.

Standards for widths and gradients

- 2.8 Minimum widths and maximum gradients for walking, wheeling and cycling will need to be met, including provision for future growth in line with ATE and TfL targets. Gradients should be shallow to cater for all users. [Streetscape Guidance](#), [London Cycling Design Standards \(LCDS\)](#) and [Pedestrian Comfort Guidance](#) provide advice on expected standards.

Location of development

- 2.9 As well as design, locational considerations for new development are also important to support and enable active travel. Some locations may not be appropriate for the proposed form of development if active travel connectivity is poor and unlikely to be improved to meet the required standard. This may be particularly relevant if large scale development is proposed on open land or the green belt, but it may also be a consideration for sites that are isolated from essential amenities by barriers to movement or where surrounding uses present a hostile environment.

Complementary transport

- 2.10 Active travel may be supported through improvements to complementary modes. For instance, introducing step free access can encourage trips by walking, wheeling or cycling to a local station, and improvements to local bus infrastructure or services may encourage people to walk as the first or last leg of a journey by public transport. Catering for these short first and last miles trips to and from public transport is an important consideration when trying to promote active travel for longer or more complex journeys.
- 2.11 Active travel can also be supported through attention to deliveries and servicing. The use of cargo bikes for local deliveries provides a form of active travel and home or office deliveries by bike may replace the need for a motorised journey.

Servicing and vehicle access

- 2.12 Servicing facilities which encroach on space for walking, wheeling or cycling should be avoided. Vehicle access points to on-site servicing and car parking will need to be designed to be safe and give priority to people walking, wheeling or cycling. Interruptions to the continuity of pavement or cycle lanes should be minimised. Vehicles queuing where they could cause an obstruction to people walking, wheeling or cycling should be avoided. Removal of on-street car parking spaces (or conversion to cycle parking) should be considered where this could improve safety or the public realm, or provide more space for walking, wheeling or cycling. Parking management or restrictions should be introduced or extended where they are not already comprehensive.

Cycle parking

- 2.13 Minimum cycle parking standards for all land use types are set out in Policy T5 and Table 10.2 of the [London Plan](#). As well as meeting quantitative standards, cycle parking should also meet the qualitative standards set out in chapter 8 of [London Cycling Design Standards](#). This includes attention to details such as access routes, spacing, security and the need to cater for a range of bikes including adapted bikes and cargo bikes as well as ensuring that all potential cyclists will be able to use parking facilities with ease.
- 2.14 Routes for accessing cycle parking may need to be segregated from vehicle access routes, for example on ramps to basement servicing or vehicle parking. Cycle parking needs to cater for short-term (visitor or customer) and long-term (resident or employee) users. Provision of additional on-street cycle parking, for example in the form of hangars, may be acceptable in exceptional cases where physical space constraints preclude short-term cycle parking on site, particularly for non-residential uses.

Funding active travel – CIL/Section 106/Section 278

- 2.15 Planning applications should include measures that support active travel. These may be integral to the development or take the form of off-site improvements. Highways and access improvements are likely to be implemented through a section 278 agreement and should prioritise access and connectivity by walking and cycling. Providing additional capacity to accommodate increased walking and cycling in the surrounding area will also be important.
- 2.16 Measures to address deficiencies in existing provision identified through the Transport Assessment, ATZ Assessment, or Road Safety Audit may be funded through local CIL or section 106 agreement. If local CIL funding is proposed, it should be ring-fenced for the specific measures identified as necessary to support active travel.

Appendix – Submission requirements issued April 2024

The following submissions relevant to active travel need to accompany the planning application:

- Healthy Streets Transport Assessment that follows TfL guidance;
- Active Travel Zone Assessment that follows TfL guidance and considers evening/night-time travel;
- Travel Plan that follows TfL guidance;
- Delivery and Servicing Plan that follows TfL guidance and demonstrates how it supports active travel;
- Construction Logistics Plan that follows TfL guidance and demonstrates how it supports active travel;
- Parking Design and Management Plan that follows TfL guidance (forthcoming) and demonstrates how it supports active travel; and
- A comprehensive package of mitigation and measures to address deficiencies in active travel.

This is not a complete list of submissions but only those that are relevant to ATE's role in promoting active travel. TfL may require additional further plans, details or assessment that extend beyond active travel to fulfil its statutory duties as the strategic transport authority for London.

All plans and drawings should show how active travel is catered for including:

- Cycle parking – access routes, location and design for both short and long stay cycle parking;
- Existing provision for walking, wheeling and cycling in and around the site including local and strategic routes and other infrastructure to support active travel;
- Proposed routes for walking, wheeling and cycling in and around the site including information on access points, routes through the site and connections to the wider networks;
- How walking, wheeling and cycling will be prioritised in the location and design of proposed site access, highway and junction works; and
- Safeguarding of land or routes for future improvements in walking, wheeling and cycling including potential routes or infrastructure identified in London Plan, Local Plans, TfL Strategic Cycling Analysis and Strategic Walking Analysis.

The Transport Assessment should describe and assess:

- Existing provision for walking, wheeling and cycling within the site and in the wider area including routes, infrastructure, wayfinding, crossing facilities, cycle hire and cycle parking;
- Barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling within the site and in the wider area including barriers to movement, lack of wayfinding, hostile or unsafe environments such as busy roads, lack of natural surveillance and poorly maintained infrastructure;
- The impacts of the development on walking, wheeling and cycling for users of the development and in the wider area;
- Proposed mitigation and improvements to active travel, on and off site that are being provided or funded by the development; and
- Demonstrate how the development will contribute towards achievement of ATE and TfL targets for active travel mode shares and improved safety and security.

Basic standards that will need to be met include:

- London Plan standards for quantum of cycle parking as set out in Policy T5 and Table 10.2;
- London Plan standards for quality of cycle parking as set out in Policy T5 and chapter 8 of London Cycle Design Standards including provision for adapted and cargo bikes;
- Car free development or car parking that does not exceed London Plan maximum standards for any of the proposed uses as set out in Policy T6 – T6.5 and the accompanying tables; and
- Minimum dimensions (widths, clearances) and maximum gradients for shared and segregated facilities for walking, wheeling and cycling as set out in TfL's Streetscape Guidance, LCDS, Pedestrian Comfort Level guidance and Local Plans.

Provision which improves on basic standards, for example additional cycle parking or facilities designed to a higher standard is likely to be positively supported.

The package of proposed mitigation measures needs to include details of:

- How any potential negative impacts on walking, wheeling or cycling have been designed out or minimised;
- Positive benefits of the proposed mitigation measures in terms of enabling more walking, wheeling and cycling in the surrounding area;
- Details of funding which will be directed specifically at active travel as well as physical measures both on and off site;

- Details of any soft measures to encourage more active travel including free memberships, discounts, loans, information promotion, education and training; and
- Information on how funding or measures will be secured – through section 106 or section 278 agreements or ring-fenced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Travel Plan needs to include details of:

- Existing levels of walking, wheeling and cycling generated by the site in its current use and in the surrounding area;
- Relevant targets for walking, wheeling and cycling set by ATE, TfL and Local Plans, local guidance or transport strategies;
- Future targets for walking, wheeling and cycling at the proposed development and monitoring arrangements to include funding; and
- Proposed measures to ensure that future targets will be met and details of funding.

