



Active
Travel
England

How we do inspections



October 2024



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

This note supplements the [How we do Design Assurance document](#), first issued by Active Travel England (ATE) on 1 August 2024. It provides detail about how Active Travel England conducts inspections and the processes that it uses to do so.

ATE's objective throughout its inspections process is determining whether funding objectives related to design quality were realised and whether potential safety issues were resolved.

1.2. Why do we need to do an inspection?

Active travel elements of schemes are inspected upon completion to:

- ensure that they have been delivered to align with the latest national design guidance;
- ensure quality, safety and accessibility is designed into infrastructure.

Issues encountered in any of these areas could lead to impacts on the local authority or combined authority [capability rating](#). ATE's approach to ensuring design quality is based on evidence that compliant schemes are safer and therefore will successfully increase the uptake of active travel trips.

2. Inspection process

2.1. Notification of scheme delivery

Once ATE has been notified that a scheme is complete, it will determine if an inspection is required. This is determined by several factors that may include location, complexity and scheme value.

It is recommended that an inspection takes place as soon as possible after scheme completion so that any potential issues can be corrected as part of any snagging stage.

2.2. Inspection type

If ATE determine that an on-site inspection is required, authorities will be given at least 14 working days' notice. ATE will attempt to be flexible with times for authorities and for other representatives who want to attend.

In many cases an unaccompanied inspection will be all that is required to obtain the necessary information. In deciding whether a site inspection should be accompanied or unaccompanied, the inspector will consider:

- If there is sufficient information to carry out an unaccompanied inspection;
- The [capability rating](#) of the authority;
- The intervention type and scheme complexity;
- The number of inspections to be carried out in the area.

Where an inspection is to be unaccompanied the authority/authorities will be advised of the inspection and a date and time will be shared in advance.

Where an inspection is to be accompanied, ATE will advise the authority of the date and time of the site inspection.

ATE is not bound to defer the inspection if one of the parties to whom notice was given does not attend or requests an alternative date at late notice.

The authority may invite other interested parties to the site inspection. ATE would like to be notified of all attendees where possible.

2.3. Overview of inspections process

Stage	Method
Notification of completed scheme	Authority reports scheme completion via regular ATE survey And/or ATE Regional Manager confirms with authority that the scheme is complete
Inspection prioritisation	Multi criteria assessment undertaken by ATE
Gather supporting data for inspection	Request to relevant authority asking for supporting evidence i.e. - General arrangements - Traffic counts etc.
Notification to inspect	Letter to authority to confirm inspection type (accompanied/unaccompanied) and to share time and date as appropriate
Inspectors conduct site visit	- Log policy and critical safety issues - Take photos of any issues - Complete site visit report with feedback comments
Log critical issues	ATE officer logs critical issues in the ATE Critical Issues Log
Issue Final Inspection Report	ATE send a letter and report to the authority. There is potential for a follow up meeting to discuss any possible action on unresolved issues
Capability and funding	ATE confirm any Record of Non Compliance*

*This is defined in the [How we do Design Assurance document](#).

3. On site inspections

ATE evaluate delivered schemes using the ATE [Scheme Review Tools](#). An on-site inspection allows a more practical review where the scheme can be fully experienced.

3.1. Site visit preparation

Prior to undertaking on-site inspections, ATE will do a full risk assessment. This includes weather considerations, risks to personal safety or lone working and risks specific to the site location.

3.2. Spot tests for critical issues

Being on site offers the opportunity to undertake some practical tests to observe and record whether critical safety issues are present. Some of the tests that ATE use are shown below.

Stage	Relevant Metric	Method
A Turning Counts	9	Take a 15-minute turning count at peak at the busiest junction or a point on the link.
B Gradients	15	Look for any gradients on dropped kerbs or crossings greater than 5 degrees by using an angle reader on your phone. 5 degrees equates to approximately 8% which is 1 in 12. This is for short sections less than 1m. For longer slopes greater than 1m use 3 degrees which equates to approximately 5% or 1 in 20. TAN the degree to get the exact gradient. Check that the crossfall of the footway is less than or equal to 2.5%.
C Gaps in Traffic	7	Do a 15-minute gap analysis on any uncontrolled crossing points during peak. Use a stopwatch to time the gaps when no vehicles are passing in either direction or in each direction if there is an island. Record if there is no gap of at least 10 seconds every 90 seconds.
D Vehicle Speeds	8	Mark two points 100m away from each other and use a stopwatch to measure the time it takes for the fastest moving vehicle to cross. You may need to reference two points from an aerial map on your phone to be accurate. If it takes 10 seconds the vehicle is travelling at approximately 20mph. If it takes 7 seconds it is travelling at approximately 30mph. If it is faster than 6 seconds it is going over 37mph and is in the critical range.
E Pedestrian Crossing Time/Speed	10	For pedestrian crossings at signal junctions measure the time in seconds from when the green symbol ends to the end of the blackout period (if used). Measure the length of the crossing in metres. Divide the length by the time and check that it is not higher than 1.2m/s. It should be standard but if it has been timed to a narrow splitter island less than 1.5m then the critical range has been exceeded.
F Pedestrian Comfort	11	Mentally mark out a 1m-by-1m square in the footway and count the number of people who walk through it during its busiest period. 27 people or over means it is at Pedestrian Comfort Level (PCL) level D or worse. 12 to 14 is ideal (PCL B).

3.3. Compliance with ATE tools

ATE's [Scheme Review Tools](#) are intended for use throughout the lifecycle of a scheme and this includes during the inspection.

Where inspected schemes have critical safety issues, they have the potential to be classified as a record of non-compliance. The process governing this is shown in the [“How we do Design Assurance”](#) document.

4. Inspection outcomes

4.1. Compliant or non-compliant

There are two outcomes an authority can receive following an inspection:

Compliant: ATE is **satisfied** that the scheme has been delivered in compliance with Government guidance and no further action is required.

OR

Non-compliant: ATE is **not satisfied** that the scheme has been delivered in compliance with Government guidance and further action is recommended.

Non-compliant schemes have the potential to change the [capability rating](#) of the authority.

4.2. Inspection report

ATE will issue an inspection report upon completion of the process.

We aim to notify an authority of the inspection outcomes within 20 working days of the site visit.

The inspection report contains the following information:

- Inspection date – Date the Final Inspection took place
- Scheme ID – Unique scheme ID used by ATE
- Scheme name – Scheme name as referenced in surveys
- Scheme summary – Summary of the scheme in terms of the type of infrastructure or potential outcome
- Authority – Highway authority responsible for the scheme
- Transport/Combined Authority - If applicable the relevant lead at a regional level. In some cases, the CA leads and in others they defer to a strategic transport authority. These are usually the main point of contact for ATE.

- Funding programme – Levelling Up Fund (LUF), Active Travel Fund (ATF), City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). etc.
- Funding allocated – Scheme budget as allocated. Needs to change via the change control process if different to original allocation.
- Date scheme reported as completed. Date given in survey or from conversation with the regional manager.
- Policy check – Any policy conflict with Government Guidance as referenced in the ATE Scheme Review Tools is shown. See section 4.3 for a longer description.
- Summary of critical issues – Any critical safety issue that has not been resolved will be shown. See section 4.4 for a longer description.

4.3. Further definitions

An inspection report may also reference the following terms:

- Policy principle – The relevant policy principle as referenced in the ATE [Route Check Tool](#).
- Outcome – Whether there is no potential for conflict or a potential for conflict is stated.
- ATE comment – ATE may add some narrative to explain why the issue was flagged. There will usually be photographic evidence from the site visit to support this.
- Authority response – If the authority has a response that mitigates the issue or explains it then this is recorded and has the potential to resolve the policy issue.

If a policy principle has been identified as having “potential for conflict” then we ask for a short response about how this may be addressed. If we do not receive a response within 10 working days, we will retain this status in the records. If a mitigating reason is provided, then we will keep this on record. At this stage a design surgery may be requested to help come up with short term resolutions or ideas to inform future investments in the area.

4.4. Summary of critical issues

Wording related to critical issues is defined as follows:

- Critical issue – One of the 16 critical issues as referenced in the ATE [Route Check Tool](#). References the risk to those walking, wheeling or cycling.
- Metric – The precise metric that relates to the critical issue. References the condition or situation that gave rise to the risk.
- Critical issue ID – ATE reference number.
- Location – Scheme location.
- ATE comment – Comment from ATE that usually explains the issue and suggests a potential solution. It should also include a reference to published guidance and a link to a case study example.
- Authority proposed action: The intention to resolve or mitigate the issue is sought.
- Authority response: Space for a more narrative based explanation.

4.5. Critical issue logging and capability

Unresolved critical safety issues may be noted as a Record of Non-Compliance after an inspection. This is a formal record that there are safety issues in the scheme that are unresolved and do not conform to guidance on active travel.

If a policy or critical safety issue has been identified, then we ask for a response on how this may be addressed. If we do not hear back within 10 working days, then the status is retained. The critical issue logging process is referenced in [How we do Design Assurance](#). ATE will store these records and potentially publish data from them.

Appendix A
Inspection report

About this report

Active Travel England (ATE) has carried out an inspection using our tools to check the quality of the constructed active travel scheme below.

For information regarding how we assess a scheme please see ATE’s “**How we do Inspections**” document.

If our inspectors have identified any policy conflicts or critical issues, guidance on ‘next steps’ is provided in section 3 and 4.

Section 1: Summary of scheme and inspection details

Example form

Inspection date	
Scheme ID	
Scheme name	
Scheme summary	
Authority	
Transport/Combined Authority	
Funding programme	
Funding allocated	
Date scheme reported as completed	

Section 2: Summary of findings from inspection

Example form

Policy check (see section 3)	Note to Inspectors select one: No potential for conflict / Potential for conflict
Critical issues (see section 4)	Note to Inspectors select one: No issues identified / Issues identified
Inspector feedback	Note to Inspectors free text box to add additional comments
Final inspection outcome	Note to Inspectors select one: No critical or policy issues identified. OR Critical or policy issues have been identified. Please complete and return section 3 and/or 4 of this report to your ATE Regional Manager within 10 working days of receipt.

Section 3: Policy check

Example form

ATE inspectors have visited the scheme site and carried out an assessment of compliance against the following policy checks.

Next steps

- Step 1** – If a policy principle has been identified as ‘potential for conflict’, please provide a short response about how this will be addressed in the ‘Authority response’ column.
- Step 2** – Return this section of the form within 10 working days to your ATE Regional Manager.

Policy principle	Outcome	ATE comment	Authority response
Cyclists must be separated from pedestrians	Note to Inspectors select one: No potential for conflict/ Potential for conflict	Note to Inspectors insert comment and where relevant include links to Case studies, guidance etc.	
Barriers, such as chicane barriers, steps and dismount signs must be avoided	No potential for conflict / Potential for conflict		
Routes must feel direct, logical and be intuitively understandable by all road users	No potential for conflict / Potential for conflict		
Surfaces must be suitable for all users	No potential for conflict / Potential for conflict		
Appropriate lighting must be provided	No potential for conflict/ Potential for conflict		
Routes must join together, or join other facilities together, as part of a holistic, connected network approach	No potential for conflict/ Potential for conflict		

Section 4: Summary of critical issues

Example form

A critical issue is defined as a street layout or condition that is associated with an increased risk of pedestrian and cyclist collisions. Our inspectors have visited the scheme site and carried out an assessment of the following ‘critical issues’.

Next steps

Step 1 – If a ‘critical issue’ has been identified, then, select an option from in the ‘Authority response’ column to describe the how this issue will be addressed and provide a short response in the final column to support this.

Step 2 – Return this section of the form within 10 working days to your ATE Regional Manager.

Critical issue	Metric	Critical issue ID	Location	ATE Inspectorate comment	Authority response: Select proposed action to resolve the critical issue	Authority response
Type 1: Conflict with motor traffic at side roads / priority junctions	>2500vpd cut across main cycling or walking streams	Note to Inspectors: insert ID	Note to Inspectors: insert road/ junction and lat/ long optional	Note to Inspectors: Where relevant include links to Case studies, guidance etc.	Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 2: Conflict with motor traffic at signal controlled junctions and roundabouts	>2500vpd cut across main cycling or walking streams				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 3: Collision alongside or from behind	Cyclists are not protected in traffic lanes between 3.25 and 3.9m wide				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 4: Trip hazard	There are level differences of greater than 20mm with no colour contrast to help identify them				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	

Critical issue	Metric	Critical issue ID	Location	ATE Inspectorate comment	Authority response: Select proposed action to resolve the critical issue	Authority response
Type 5: Conflict with kerbside activity (parking, loading, risk of 'dooring')	Cycle facility next to parking/ loading with no buffer				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 6: Risk of crossing conflicts	On busy roads (>8000vpd) formal crossings are more than 400m apart On quieter roads (<8000vpd), desire lines are blocked by parking and loading				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 7: Standard of crossing facility	On busy roads (>8000vpd), there are uncontrolled crossings of two or more lanes with no gaps in traffic At signal junctions there are arms with no green man for pedestrians				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 8: Speed of traffic (where cyclists are not separated or pedestrians crossing uncontrolled)	85th percentile > 37mph (60kph)				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 9: Total volume of traffic (where cyclists are not separated or pedestrians cross uncontrolled)	>10000 vpd >5% of traffic is HGVs				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 10: Required crossing speed (risk of pedestrians coming into conflict with traffic)	Pedestrians must cross at a speed of over 1.2m/s to get across the crossing in time				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	

Critical issue	Metric	Critical issue ID	Location	A TE Inspectorate comment	Authority response: Select proposed action to resolve the critical issue	Authority response
Type 11: Clear walking spaces free of obstructions and furniture, reducing risk of pedestrians walking in the carriageway.	<1m clear footway width on any footway <1.5m clear footway width for over 6m 1-2m clear footway width with a Pedestrian Comfort Level of D-E				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 12: Effective width next to tram line on a straight run or on a curve	<2.4m from tramline edge to kerb on a straight run Insufficient clearance on a curve				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 13: Crossing angle (between cyclist desire line and tram tracks)	Crossing angle less than 60 degrees				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 14: Cycling surface defects: non cycle friendly ironworks, raised/ sunken covers/gullies, potholes, loose/cracked surfaces, poor drainage, sharp gradients (1 in 8)	Major defects				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 15: Walking/wheeling surface defects: non flush tables, misleading tactile information, cracked paving, slip-risks present from covers, steep slopes	Major defects				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	
Type 16: Guard railing	Presence of guard railing				Resolved Resolution planned Resolution pending – funding to be identified No planned action	