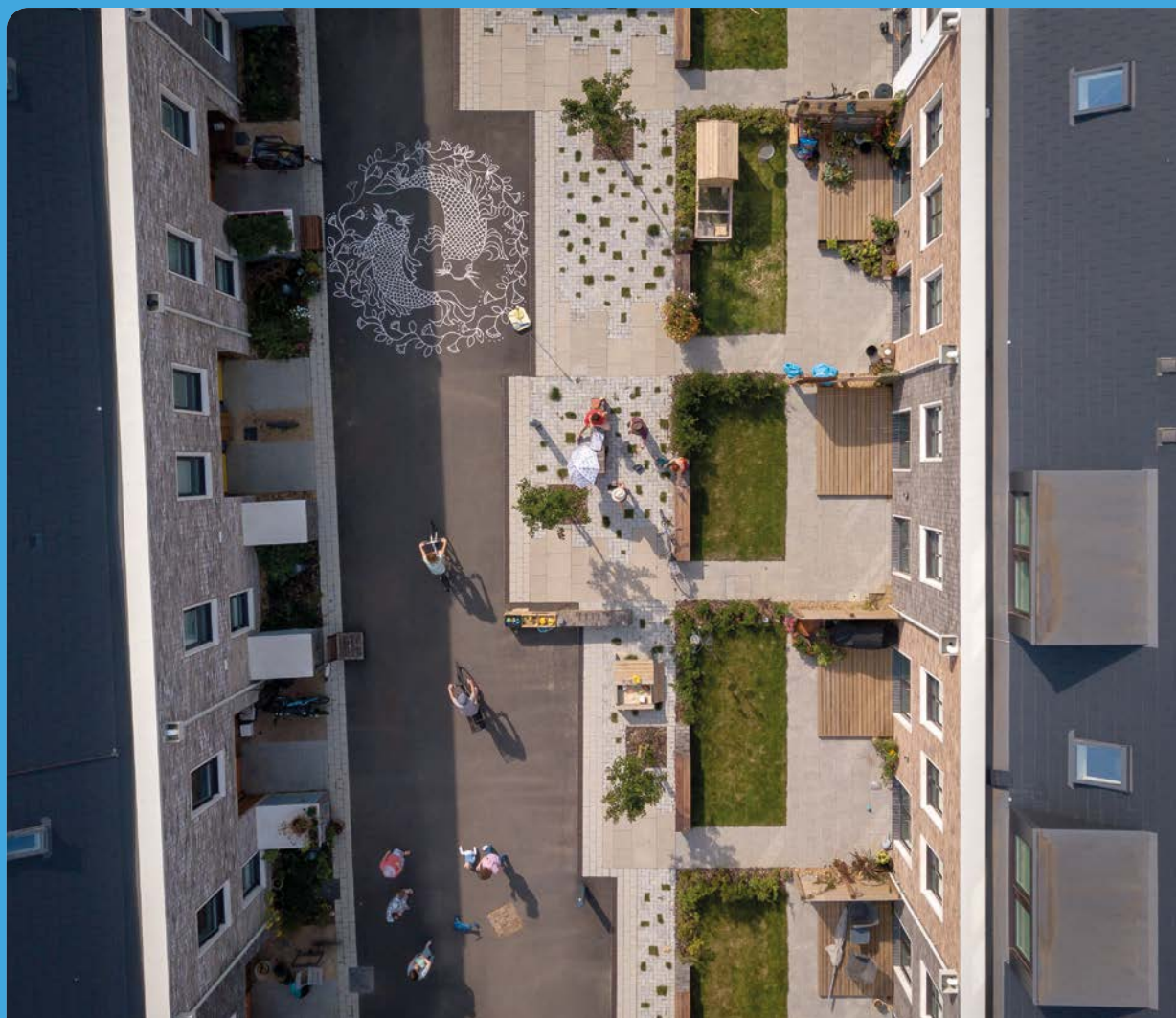




Active
Travel
England

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



June 2023



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Active Travel England Standing Advice

Note: Active travel and sustainable development

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This advice note has been prepared by Active Travel England (ATE), a new statutory consultee in the planning system to help support local planning authorities (LPAs) in their role as decision makers for planning applications. It is specifically intended for LPAs outside of London, with a separate advice note prepared for planning applications within the administrative area of Greater London.
- 1.2 Upon receipt of a 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 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 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, with pushchairs and those by scooter, rollerblades and similar forms of wheeled mobility) and cycling to be seen as the most convenient, desirable and affordable way to travel.
- 1.5 The [Gear Change](#) strategy, published in 2020, sets out the government's objective for half of all journeys in towns and cities being walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. [The second walking and cycling investment strategy \(CWIS2\)](#) sets out further objectives to boost overall levels of walking, wheeling and cycling across England.

1.6 Aligned to these strategies, 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, 73, 83-86, 124, 125, and chapters 8, 9 and 12
- [Planning Practice Guidance](#)
- [Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle infrastructure design](#) (LTN 1/20)
- [Manual for Streets](#)
- [Manual for Streets 2](#)
- [National Design Guide](#)
- [National Model Design Code](#)
- [Inclusive Mobility](#)
- [DfT Circular 01/2022: Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development](#)
- [Designing for Walking](#)
- [Streets for a Healthy Life](#)
- [Building for a Healthy Life](#)
- [Streets for All](#)
- [Active Design](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide](#)

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 gather evidence and assess the active travel merits – walking, wheeling and cycling – of a development proposal. An accompanying [User Manual](#) and [Tutorial Video](#) has also been produced to assist users of the Toolkit.

1.9 ATE encourages local authority officers (planning and highways) to use the Toolkit to support its assessment of planning applications, particularly where standing advice is offered. The toolkit is a public document and ATE would equally encourage applicants and transport consultants to use this when developing their proposals.

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 – 2.20 of this advice note for which LPAs are encouraged to consider when assessing relevant planning applications.

Transport Assessment and Travel Plans

2.2 NPPF paragraph 113 states that 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. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan and DfT Circular 01/2022 also set out that we need to move away from transport planning based on predicting future demand to provide capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes (sometimes referred to as 'vision and validate').

2.3 In order to assess the active travel opportunities within new developments, Transport Assessments should:

- Forecast the multi-modal movements generated by a development, quantifying the additional trip generation and the distribution and assignment;
- Provide a qualitative analysis of the current infrastructure in the surrounding area (which may include using the Cycling Level of Service Tool in LTN 1/20), taking into account how additional movements across all modes of transport will impact upon the capacity of public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling networks; and
- Provide detail (and justification) of any proposed improvements to infrastructure and the proposed delivery mechanism, as well as any other supporting strategies that seek to enable an increase in walking, wheeling and cycling rates.

2.4 Additionally, Travel Plans must clearly outline the mode share targets and proposed measures to achieve these, monitoring strategy and remedial measures to be implemented if targets are not met. Agreed travel plan measures should be secured either by way of planning obligations or conditions.

2.5 It is important that the local highway authority, and National Highways where applicable, are consulted for their views on the submitted transport reports.

Access to local amenities and public transport

2.6 The National Design Guide states:

75. Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They include walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport. They contribute to making high quality places for people to enjoy. They also form a crucial component of urban character. Their success

is measured by how they contribute to the quality and character of the place, not only how well they function.

76. Successful development depends upon a movement network that makes connections to destinations, places and communities, both within the site and beyond its boundaries.

- 2.7 NPPF paragraph 105 also prescribes that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 2.8 In this regard, a mix of local amenities should be provided within an 800m walking distance of all residential properties or staff entrances for workplace facilities, while a bus stop with regular service(s) should be located within 400m. Local amenities may include but not be limited to a food shop, park or green space, indoor meeting space, primary school, post office or bank and GP surgery. All developments that include new dwellings should demonstrate how local schools, colleges and higher education institutions will be accessed by active travel modes.
- 2.9 Moreover, a high-quality walking connection should be provided from the site to a regular public transport service that enables people to carry out daily duties such as accessing employment and education opportunities. Effective and convenient public transport should be available either through proximity to existing routes or through the provision of new or extended routes. For certain types and scales of development, LPAs should also consider bus stop and rail station (where applicable) facilities that enable ease of access by active travel modes. These can include secure and overlooked public cycle parking, cycle facilities (e.g. repair stands, air pumps and changing areas), seating provision, lighting, adequate shelter to accommodate likely demand, service information (including real time information) and raised kerbs at stops.
- 2.10 LPAs should refer to appropriate design guidance including Manual for Streets, Inclusive Mobility and CIHT's Designing for Walking for further details but, as a minimum, ATE expect walking routes to:
- be 2m wide (with limited pinch points of 1.5m due to street furniture) and localised widening to accommodate peak usage;
 - be step-free;
 - have a smooth, even surface;
 - be uncluttered;
 - have street lighting; and
 - include appropriate crossings in compliance with LTN 1/20 Table 10-2 and Inclusive Mobility.

Suitability for walking, wheeling and cycling

- 2.11 NPPF paragraph 104 (c) states that opportunities to promote active travel modes should be identified at the earliest stages of development proposals. In this regard, the initial design considerations should ensure that walking routes within and surrounding the site must be accessible to all users, to include consideration of access controls, widths, steps, ramps and materials.
- 2.12 Moreover, all new or improved cycle routes need to be fully accessible. Cycling infrastructure should be provided on-site, while this and any new or improved off-site infrastructure to destinations such as schools, local centres, employment centres, railway stations and the existing cycling network should conform to the five Core Design Principles (coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive), separation requirements (Figure 4.1) and geometry requirements required by LTN 1/20.
- 2.13 Shared use routes (i.e. a path or surface that is available for use by both pedestrians and cyclists) must be avoided along all new or improved streets, unless they fit within the limited acceptable situations listed in LTN 1/20. Streets, footways and cycle routes must be adequately lit at night to provide safety and security for all users.

Street design

- 2.14 NPPF paragraph 112 prescribes that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility, and create places that are safe, secure and attractive. Paragraph 82 of the National Design Guide further emphasises the need to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements by creating routes that are safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities.
- 2.15 To achieve this, the following criteria should be considered when assessing the design and layout of new developments:
- Within the site, routes for walking, wheeling and cycling should be shorter and more direct than the equivalent by car. This could be achieved, for example, by providing fewer accesses and routes for private cars to give priority to sustainable modes of transport (filtered permeability).
 - All opportunities for safe, step-free, fully accessible walking, wheeling and cycling site access points must be maximised, and these should exceed the number of access points provided solely for motor vehicles (except where additional accesses would provide no benefit to people walking, wheeling and cycling).
 - Proposals should not prejudice the connectivity of existing and future development. Where such potential may exist for future sites, development should progress within a comprehensive masterplan framework to enable a co-ordinated approach to be adopted.
 - Site accesses must be arranged to prevent private vehicle drivers from using the site as a shortcut while undertaking longer journeys. This is best achieved through

filtered permeability, or by ensuring all general traffic accesses are taken from the same main road.

- Within the red line boundary of the site, any new or improved residential/local streets should be designed (no centre line, horizontal deflection, narrow width) and signed for vehicles to travel at a maximum speed of 20mph, while other streets should be designed and signed for speeds of no more than 30mph.
- The proposed street design should remove opportunities for indiscriminate and obstructive parking that would cause safety hazards and prevent access by active modes of travel. This can be achieved by either designing in protected or marked parking bays with accompanying street furniture, planting or other features, or implementing restrictions that prevent footway parking, the mounting of kerbs, damage to green infrastructure and the blockage of crossing points and sightlines.

Safety at junctions and crossings

2.16 All new or improved junctions should be designed in line with the movement hierarchy: people walking/wheeling, followed by cyclists, public transport users, then freight and private motor vehicles. The Junction Assessment Tool from LTN 1/20 should be used for the design of all junctions except priority junctions between minor roads with flows below 500 vehicles per day.

2.17 Within the red line boundary of the site and where necessary off-site, the appropriate crossing type (e.g. signalised, zebra, uncontrolled, continuous footway) must be provided along forecasted desire lines, including away from junctions. Crossings should be evenly spaced and provided at regular intervals on most streets. Crossings need to be accessible to all and comply with standards set out in LTN 1/20 and Inclusive Mobility.

Cycle parking and facilities

2.18 Cycle parking should be secure, covered and provided in line with Tables 11-1 and 11-2 of LTN 1/20 (with at least 5% of spaces to be provided for non-standard cycles to accommodate people with mobility impairments) or local planning policy, where the local plan target is more ambitious. Facilities must also be suitable for a range of cycle types including cargo bikes, tandems and tricycles.

2.19 For workplaces, public buildings (including those used for leisure and recreation) and larger retail development, high-quality facilities including showers, lockers, changing rooms and drying areas should be provided to promote the use of active travel modes.

Decision-making

2.20 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, associated Planning Practice Guidance as well as the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code and Manual for Streets 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.

