



Active
Travel
England

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Your Ref: 24/02889/FP
Our Ref: ATE/25/00059/FULL
Date: 30 January 2025

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: North Hertfordshire District Council

Application Ref: 24/02889/FP

Site Address: LAND AT ROUNDWOOD NES 3, CHURCH LANE,
GRAVELEY, SG1 6HA

Description of development: Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works

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.~~

Croudace Response - 07/04/2025

1.0 Background

Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations on this planning application. The site is allocated for development in the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 as GA1: Land at Roundwood, designated for 330 homes.

ATE also notes the previous application submitted for this site (Ref: 23/02492/FP), for which a deferral response was issued on 08 December 2023. This application remains undetermined. However, this new submission seeks to address some of the concerns raised in the previous review, including those related to active travel. Additionally, a nearby application (Ref: 23/02935/OP) for 900 dwellings was also subject to a deferral response from ATE, issued on 02 February 2024. This response should be read alongside both previous consultation responses

2.0 Summary

ATE has reviewed the application against the criteria outlined in our updated planning assessment toolkit, national planning policy, and active travel design guidance. Given the advanced stage of the proposal and its planning history, ATE has not provided a comprehensive review.

Concerns exist regarding distances to offsite amenities, such as shops and schools. However, this was not previously highlighted in ATE's response. Moreover, Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan requires developments to demonstrate that sites are served by safe, direct, and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes, which appears to be broadly achieved in this proposal. The planned connections to Botany Bay Lane and Back Lane provide safe and coherent access to local amenities, aligning with Policy SP6, which promotes sustainable transport modes.

Following a review of the proposals, ATE does not wish to raise any significant concerns and is generally satisfied with the approach taken. The amendments made appear to have resulted in notable improvements. However, there are minor points of clarification that, if addressed, could further enhance active travel provision. These may require design changes beyond what can be secured through planning conditions. The key areas for consideration are outlined below:

3.0 Areas of Concern

Connections to the Public Right of Way (North)

Two connections to the public right of way are currently proposed, which is welcomed. However, the previous submission included three connections, with a central link that has since been removed. Given that Policy SP6 emphasises the need for integrated and direct active travel connections, reintroducing this link could provide additional benefits. Further clarification on the revised approach would be appreciated.

We have had to remove the third access point, associated with the previous application, to the existing PRoW along the Northern Boundary due to BNG/Ecological impacts which would have been associated with the removal of trees and hedges. The two access points have been retained at either end of the PRoW, one as an extension of the main active travel route (North-West corner) with the second forming an extension to the re-purposed Back Lane. (North-East corner)

Active Travel Route – Combined Cycling and Walking Route (Shared Footway/Street Surface)

The proposed shared-use route should maintain a consistent width of 3.0m throughout, in line with LTN 1/20 design standards. If any narrowing is necessary, for example, to accommodate Route Protection Areas, this should be clearly justified. The requirement for well-designed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is also reinforced by Policy T1, which requires safe and convenient movement for all non-motorised users.

The route maintains a 3.0m width route throughout, however, at the proposed connection point to Orwell Avenue, at the South-West corner of the site, the shared route tapers to 2.0m due to the extensive existing vegetation along the southern boundary. A raised platform in the form of a timber structure is proposed to enable crossing over the existing ditch. The route has been locally narrowed at this point to minimise impact on Root Protection Areas and to avoid extensive removal of existing vegetation.

Active Travel Route – Leisure Route (Including Equestrian Access on Back Lane)

The re-purposed section of Back Lane should ideally be widened to 3.0m to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and passing horses safely. This would align with Policy SP6, which encourages the integration of sustainable travel corridors and high-quality green infrastructure.

The approach taken for the width as shown (2m) was agreed with the Highways Officer at the council during the pre-application process and it was resolved that having this width was suitable to accommodate a leisure route to provide a hierarchy of active travel routes across the development.

Cycle Parking

While details on cycle parking are welcomed, it remains unclear what type of storage will be provided for apartment buildings—i.e., whether Sheffield stands or racks will be used. This is not fully evident from drawing DES-716-265-0 (Bins and Cycle Storage Plans and Elevations).

Cycle Storage for apartment buildings will be provided in the form of Sheffield stands and is illustrated on DES-716-265-0 (Bins and Cycle Storage Plans and Elevations) as part of the house type drawing pack.

LTN 1/20 expects cycle parking to be designed to accommodate a variety of users, including non-standard cycles for individuals with mobility impairments, and charging facilities for e-cycles, please confirm whether communal stores meet these standards.

At present, the communal cycle store indicate only Sheffield stands at present and are subject to further technical design at working drawings stage.

Further clarity is required on cycle storage provision for individual dwellings to ensure compliance with LTN 1/20 and security standards. It has not been possible to identify plans and drawings for this storage.

Cycle Storage for individual dwellings will be provided in the form of a secure cycle storage shed with locations indicated on drawing DES-716-110 Parking Location Plan. These secure cycle storage sheds will be suitably sized for 2 bikes.

4.0 Next Steps

ATE requests that the local planning authority shares this correspondence with the applicant and their agents. ATE would be content to review further submitted information to help address the above identified deficiencies with a view to providing a further response and recommended conditions, subject to receiving this information.