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Date: 30/04/2026

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

From: Spatial Planning Service, Active Travel England

To: *Paul Chaston - North Hertfordshire District Council*

Application Ref: 26/00558/HYA

Site Address: Land At Pound Farm Bedford Road Ickleford, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RS

Description of development: Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).

Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:

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.

1.0 Background

This application relates to a **hybrid planning application** for the redevelopment of land to the south of Pound Farm, Ickleford, comprising up to **230 dwellings, a 65-bed care home, a SEND school and associated infrastructure**. Phase 1 seeks detailed consent for 100 dwellings and the school, with the remainder in outline.

The Transport Assessment (TA) sets out a **vision-led approach**, seeking to deliver a sustainable, mixed-use extension supported by enhanced active travel connectivity, improvements to the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, new bus stops and internal walking and cycling routes. The scheme also proposes a **landscaped active travel corridor through the site**, alongside new and improved crossing infrastructure across Bedford Road.

There are a number of **positive elements**. The site benefits from proximity to Ickleford village (approximately 750m), with a range of amenities accessible within a 10–15 minute

walk . The retention and enhancement of PRow 16, the provision of a new 6.0m bridleway corridor, and proposals for new crossings across Bedford Road represent a clear intention to support active travel. The inclusion of a school and local facilities also has the potential to support internal trip capture.

However, **significant gaps remain**. The application does not yet demonstrate that the proposed active travel infrastructure will meet the **five core LTN 1/20 principles (coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive)**. The reliance on shared-use infrastructure, limited detail on route design, and uncertainty regarding off-site connectivity, particularly across and along the A600 mean that the **vision is not yet sufficiently evidenced in delivery terms**.

Overall, whilst the scheme sets out a **positive strategic intent**, it does not yet provide sufficient confidence that high-quality active travel outcomes will be achieved in practice.

2.0 Summary: Active Travel Assessment

2.1 Trip Generation and Travel Plan

The TA forecasts approximately **103 two-way AM peak trips and 98 PM peak trips**, with over **1,000 daily vehicular trips** associated with the residential element . These figures are derived using TRICS and include a **10% reduction to reflect assumed modal shift**. The application appropriately follows standard methodology; however, the **assumed 10% reduction in vehicular trips is not robustly justified**. Whilst the TA references a sustainable travel vision and Travel Plan measures, the supporting infrastructure required to achieve this level of modal shift is not yet sufficiently defined. As such, the reduction appears **aspirational rather than evidence-based**. The Framework Travel Plan includes **monitoring, travel information packs and behavioural measures** . These are positive in principle, but they are **secondary to the provision of high-quality infrastructure**. There is limited evidence of **clear, measurable mode share targets, enforcement mechanisms, or remedial strategies**, which are essential components of a robust Travel Plan. In addition, whilst walking distances to local services are identified, the TA does not clearly demonstrate that **all-day trips by walking, wheeling and cycling are fully and appropriately accounted for**, particularly in relation to route quality and user experience.

ATE RAG Rating: Amber

ATE Recommendation: Provide evidence-based modal shift assumptions, clear mode share targets, monitoring frameworks, and demonstrate how infrastructure delivery underpins Travel Plan outcomes.

2.2 Active Travel Routes, Off-Site Infrastructure and Access to Public Transport

The TA identifies existing footways, PRowS and public transport provision, including bus stops within **160–350m** and Hitchin station approximately **2.4km away** . It also proposes enhancements including a **new Pegasus/toucan crossing, bus stop improvements, and PRow upgrades**.

The site is located within **800m of a range of local amenities**, including shops, schools and community facilities, suggesting good potential for walking trips . However, this is highly dependent on the quality of routes, which is not sufficiently demonstrated.

A key concern is the **A600 Bedford Road**, which acts as a significant barrier. The TA acknowledges the need for crossing improvements, and a Pegasus/toucan crossing is proposed; however, **road safety audit findings highlight visibility and conflict risks**, reinforcing concerns regarding user safety.

Cycling connectivity is more limited. Whilst regional routes and PRoWs are identified, there is **no clear demonstration of safe, direct and segregated cycle routes to key destinations**, including Hitchin or the wider network. The reliance on **shared-use infrastructure and rural routes does not align with LTN 1/20 best practice**, particularly for a development of this scale.

The TA references **S106 contributions towards LCWIP schemes**, including a segregated cycleway along Bedford Road . However, this is not secured as part of the application and introduces uncertainty regarding delivery.

ATE RAG Rating: Red

ATE Recommendation: Provide a clear, deliverable off-site active travel strategy, including segregated cycle provision, safe crossings, and secured infrastructure aligned with LCWIP priorities.

2.3 Site Permeability and Placemaking

The internal layout proposes a network of streets, shared routes and a central corridor, with road typologies including **shared surfaces and 3.0m shared footway/cycleways** .

The layout demonstrates a **degree of permeability**, with connections through the site and integration of green infrastructure. However, the design approach indicates a **continued prioritisation of vehicular movement**, with limited evidence of a clearly defined movement hierarchy favouring pedestrians and cyclists.

The reliance on **shared-use infrastructure within the site raises concerns**, particularly in terms of safety and comfort, and does not reflect best practice for developments of this scale. There is also limited detail on **junction design, crossing priority, and street-level user experience**, which are critical to placemaking and active travel uptake.

ATE RAG Rating: Amber

ATE Recommendation: Provide a clear movement hierarchy, detailed street typologies with dimensions, and demonstrate pedestrian and cycle priority throughout the site.

2.4 Cycle Parking

The TA confirms that **cycle parking will be provided for all dwellings and uses**, including secure storage and provision for the school .

Whilst this is welcomed, the information provided is **high-level**, with limited detail on **quantity, design, accessibility, security, and compliance with LTN 1/20**. For example, there is no clear evidence of provision for visitors, long-stay vs short-stay parking, or integration into the public realm.

ATE RAG Rating: Amber

ATE Recommendation: Provide a detailed cycle parking strategy, including numbers, typologies, security measures, and compliance with LTN 1/20.

3.0 Conclusion

The application presents a **positive vision-led approach**, with clear intent to support sustainable travel through enhanced connectivity, Travel Plan measures and integration of green infrastructure. The site is relatively well located in relation to Ickleford and local services, and there are opportunities to support walking and wheeling trips.

However, the submission **does not yet demonstrate that high-quality active travel infrastructure will be delivered in practice**. Key issues include:

- Lack of **segregated and LTN 1/20-compliant cycle infrastructure**
- Insufficient detail and certainty regarding **off-site connections and crossings**
- Over-reliance on **shared-use routes**
- **Unjustified modal shift assumptions** within the TA
- Limited detail on **movement hierarchy, placemaking and cycle parking design**

As such, the scheme **does not yet fully comply with the ATE Planning Application Assessment Toolkit**.

Overall ATE Recommendation: Not supported at this stage (Amber/Red deferral)

ATE would expect the applicant to:

- Provide a **robust and deliverable active travel strategy**, both on- and off-site
- Demonstrate **full compliance with LTN 1/20 principles**
- Justify **modal shift assumptions with evidence**
- Provide detailed design information on **routes, crossings, and cycle parking**

Subject to the above being addressed, the application could move towards compliance.