



Active
Travel
England

Active Travel England
West Offices
Station Rise
York
YO1 6GA
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Your Ref: 25/03080/HYA
Our Ref: ATE/26/00169/HYB
Date: 17 February 2026

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: 25/03080/HYA

Site Address: GA2, Land North-East Of Great Ashby Stevenage, Hertfordshire

Description of development: Hybrid application for a residential-led development comprising residential (Use Class C3), educational use (Use Class F1), a community hub (Use Class F2) with associated new internal roads, access, parking, cycling infrastructure, landscaping and other associated infrastructure. Full application comprises the construction of vehicle access and an active travel link via Mendip Way, with associated landscaping and drainage works. The outline application, for which all matters are reserved except means of access, comprises the erection of up to 640 dwellings (Use Class C3), a site for a primary school, further land reserved for educational use (Use Class F1), a site for a community hub (Use Class F2), with associated infrastructure.

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.~~

1.0 Background

This hybrid application seeks full permission for the principal vehicular and active travel access from Mendip Way, alongside outline permission for up to approximately 640 dwellings, a primary school, community hub, open space and associated infrastructure. The application is supported by a comprehensive suite of documents including the Design and Access Statement (Parts 1–5), Parameter Plans, Illustrative Masterplan, Active Travel Framework Plan, Public Transport and PRow Framework Plans, Vehicular Movement Framework Plan, Transport Assessment (Parts 1–8), Environmental Statement (Chapter 15: Transport), Green Travel Plan and multi-part Accessibility Audit.

The submitted material establishes a clear strategic commitment to embedding active travel within the development. The delivery of a segregated 3.0m cycleway and 2.0m footway along Mendip Way as part of the full application represents a strong and policy-aligned intervention that accords with LTN 1/20 principles. Multiple pedestrian and cycle access points are proposed, Public Rights of Way are retained and enhanced (including the upgrade of Bridleway Weston 033), and the movement strategy is structured around green infrastructure and traffic-calmed streets. The co-location of the primary school, community hub and open space within the site supports the creation of a walkable neighbourhood and reduces reliance on private car travel.

However, while the strategic vision is positive, the majority of the scheme remains in outline and key elements necessary to demonstrate full compliance with the ATE Toolkit are not yet secured. Route alignments, widths, junction priority and internal street treatments remain indicative. The Accessibility Audit identifies deficiencies on several existing walking and cycling routes and proposes improvement packages, but the certainty of delivery, timing and funding of all such measures is not yet fully demonstrated. As such, the scheme shows clear intent but does not yet provide sufficient detail to confirm that high-quality active travel outcomes will be delivered in practice.

2.0 Summary: Active Travel Assessment

2.1 Trip Generation and Travel Plan

The Transport Assessment provides detailed trip generation modelling using TRICS, TEMPro and the Hertfordshire Comet Model. It assesses opening year and future year scenarios and recognises sustainable modes as the preferred mitigation approach rather than expanding highway capacity. This is reinforced in the Environmental Statement, which explicitly frames improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure as a key mitigation measure.

A Green Travel Plan accompanies the application and includes the appointment of a Travel Plan Coordinator, monitoring for five years post-occupation, annual travel surveys and the provision of Travel Information Packs. The governance structure is appropriate and consistent with standard Travel Plan practice.

However, the forecasting of walking, wheeling and cycling trips is not clearly presented in a way that demonstrates a robust and ambitious shift towards active travel. While people trip rates and baseline mode splits are referenced, there is limited evidence that all-day active travel trips to, from and within the site have been comprehensively modelled or that proposed infrastructure quality has been directly linked to expected behavioural change. Baseline cycling and walking mode shares remain relatively modest and the Travel Plan does not set clearly defined, ambitious targets aligned with ATE expectations for a development of this scale.

Furthermore, although monitoring mechanisms are included, the remedial measures in the event that targets are not met lack specificity and enforceability. Without clearer thresholds and defined interventions, there is a risk that mode share improvements may not be realised in practice.

RAG rating: AMBER

ATE Recommendation: Strengthen the Travel Plan to include clear and ambitious walking, wheeling and cycling mode share targets, explicit forecasting of active travel trips, and defined remedial measures that are triggered if targets are not achieved.

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

The application is supported by a comprehensive Accessibility Audit, Active Travel Framework Plan, PRoW Framework Plan, Recreational Routes Framework Plan and Public Transport Framework Plan. These documents demonstrate a structured assessment of walking and cycling connectivity to key destinations including local schools, neighbourhood centres, open space and Stevenage town centre. The identification of specific improvement measures, such as widening footways and cycleways, resurfacing, lighting improvements, vegetation clearance, crossings and street furniture is welcomed and provides a strong evidence base.

The full application proposals along Mendip Way are particularly positive. The segregated cycleway and footway, combined with pedestrian crossings and integration with existing provision, align well with LTN 1/20 and establish a high-quality access corridor from the outset. The proposed internal bus loop and proximity of much of the site to bus stops support integration with public transport. The evidence demonstrates that a range of local amenities in Great Ashby are accessible within reasonable walking distances, and that Stevenage rail station and the National Cycle Network are accessible by cycle.

However, several existing walking and cycling routes assessed in the Accessibility Audit currently fall below desirable standards, including one cycling route that scores poorly. While improvement measures are identified, their delivery is not yet fully secured. In addition, given the outline nature of the development, it cannot yet be confirmed that most buildings will be within 800m of a comprehensive range of amenities via well-designed routes, or that all buildings will be within 400m of a high-frequency bus stop using routes that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. The reliance on financial contributions to deliver some off-site improvements introduces uncertainty regarding timing and implementation.

Overall, the connectivity strategy is strong in principle, but full compliance with ATE accessibility and quality criteria has not yet been conclusively demonstrated.

RAG rating: AMBER

ATE Recommendation: Secure, through condition or legal agreement, the delivery of priority walking and cycling improvements identified in the Accessibility Audit and require reserved matters submissions to demonstrate compliance with ATE accessibility distance and quality criteria and LTN 1/20 design standards.

2.3 Site Permeability and Placemaking

The Design and Access Statement, Illustrative Masterplan and Vehicular Movement Framework Plan present a landscape-led layout structured around retained woodland and green corridors. The internal movement framework incorporates modal filters, agreed pinch points and traffic-calming measures, indicating a clear intention to manage vehicular dominance and support walking and cycling permeability. The integration of the primary school, community hub and open space within the site contributes positively to placemaking and supports short local trips by active modes.

The Environmental Statement identifies enhancements to PRowWs and new pedestrian and cyclist links as beneficial in terms of amenity. These principles align with ATE expectations for walkable neighbourhoods and indicate a coherent placemaking vision.

However, as the majority of internal layout details are reserved, there is insufficient certainty that pedestrian and cycle priority will be consistently delivered at side roads, junctions and crossings. The balance between vehicular access and active travel priority will depend heavily on detailed design at reserved matters stage. Without secured parameters ensuring low vehicle speeds, continuous crossings and minimal carriageway dominance, there remains a risk that the intended placemaking outcomes may not be fully realised.

RAG rating: AMBER

ATE Recommendation: Require reserved matters applications to clearly demonstrate pedestrian and cycle priority across the internal network, including continuous footways and cycleways, low-speed environments and high-quality public realm consistent with ATE placemaking principles and LTN 1/20.

2.4 Cycle Parking

The submitted documentation provides limited detail regarding the quantity, design and location of cycle parking for residential units, the primary school or community facilities. While national guidance including LTN 1/20 is referenced within the Environmental Statement, there is insufficient information to confirm compliance with cycle parking standards.

The absence of confirmed cycle parking provision represents a significant gap in demonstrating how everyday cycling will be supported. Without secure, convenient and accessible cycle storage including provision for non-standard cycles and visitors the ambition to increase cycling mode share may be undermined.

RAG rating: RED

ATE Recommendation: Secure a condition requiring all reserved matters submissions to demonstrate full compliance with LTN 1/20 cycle parking standards, including minimum quantities, high-quality design, convenient and secure locations, and provision for a range of user needs.

3.0 Conclusion

The GA2 application is supported by a comprehensive suite of transport, accessibility and masterplanning documents and demonstrates a clear strategic commitment to embedding active travel within the development. The delivery of segregated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Mendip Way as part of the full application represents a substantive and policy-aligned intervention secured at this stage. The structured Accessibility Audit,

identification of route improvements, landscape-led movement framework and incorporation of modal filtering principles collectively indicate a positive direction of travel consistent with the objectives of the ATE Planning Application Assessment Toolkit.

However, as a predominantly outline scheme, several elements necessary to demonstrate full compliance with the ATE Toolkit and LTN 1/20 remain to be secured. These include strengthening the ambition and enforceability of the Travel Plan, securing delivery and timing of identified off-site walking and cycling improvements, demonstrating pedestrian and cycle priority across the internal street network at reserved matters stage, and providing fully compliant cycle parking provision. These matters introduce uncertainty but do not represent fundamental flaws in the site's location, strategic connectivity or overarching movement approach.

Active Travel England does not consider deferral to be proportionate in this instance. The application is supported by a substantial and robust evidence base, and the principal deficiencies identified relate to matters of detail, certainty and enforceability rather than to structural or locational failings. The development benefits from proximity to existing services in Great Ashby, access to public transport within walking distance of much of the site, and the secured delivery of high-quality active travel infrastructure along Mendip Way. The remaining issues are capable of being addressed through appropriately worded planning conditions, legal agreement and robust control at reserved matters stage.

Overall ATE position: Conditional support.

To achieve full compliance with the ATE Toolkit and LTN 1/20, the development must secure:

- Delivery of priority walking and cycling improvements identified in the Accessibility Audit;
- Clear and ambitious active travel mode share targets supported by enforceable monitoring and remedial measures;
- Demonstrable pedestrian and cycle priority across the internal layout; and
- Cycle parking provision fully compliant with LTN 1/20 standards.

Subject to these matters being satisfactorily addressed, the scheme has the potential to deliver active travel outcomes consistent with national guidance and ATE expectations.