



Active  
Travel  
England

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

Your Ref: R3.0010/24  
Our Ref: ATE/24/00113/FULL  
Date: 07 March 2024

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Oxfordshire County Council

**Application Ref:** R3.0010/24

**Site Address:** CENTRE OF POND 159M FROM 6 WATLINGTON ROAD 87M FROM B4009, WATLINGTON ROAD, SHIRBURN, WATLINGTON, OX49 5DR

**Description of development:** The construction of two sections of single carriageway forming part of the Watlington Relief Road (WRR) including footways and cycleways, two new roundabouts, a new junction linking Britwell Road/Harmans Way and the provision of a vehicular pick-up and drop-off area to Icknield Community College, a new section of bridleway (Pyrton Lane to east and west of the route alignment), pedestrian crossing facilities, a new bridge over Chalgrove Brook, landscaping and planting, drainage improvements, street lighting and associated earthworks and 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

ATE welcomes the opportunity to comment on the full application for the construction of two sections of single carriageway forming part of the Watlington Relief Road (WRR) including footways and cycleways, two new roundabouts, a new junction linking Britwell Road/Harmans Way and the provision of a vehicular pick-up and drop-off area to Icknield Community College, a new section of bridleway and associated and infrastructure.

## 2.0 Summary

A key observation of these proposals is that the proposed new road will be surrounded by residential areas. It is therefore considered essential to ensure high-quality infrastructure for all modes is provided in a way that prioritises the movements and desire lines of pedestrian and cyclists. This approach not only makes walking, wheeling and cycling an attractive option, but also supports the government's objective for half of short journeys to be walked, wheeled and cycled by 2030. Therefore, a number of concerns and recommendations have been identified in regard to the three new junctions proposed below.

## 3.0 National Policy and Guidance

**These proposals have been assessed in accordance with the following national planning policy and design guidance.**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out how:

*104. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of... development proposals, so that:*

*c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.*

*110. In assessing... specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*

*a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; [and]*

*b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.*

*c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code*

*112. ...applications for development should:*

*a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas...;*

*b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; [and]*

*c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*

*113. 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.*

Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking - the Government's cycling and walking plan for England.

This sets the Government's vision for cycling and walking to be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030. Active Travel England's responsibilities for walking also extend to "wheeling", such as the use of wheelchairs (self-propelled or powered) and mobility scooters.

Paragraph 82 of the National Design Guide (Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, 2021), states:

*Priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements, subject to location and the potential to create connections. Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists mean creating routes that are safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities. These are designed as part of attractive spaces with good sightlines, and well chosen junctions and crossings, so that people want to use them. Public rights of way are protected, enhanced and well-linked into the wider network of pedestrian and cycle routes.*

Inclusive mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians provides guidance on designing and improving the accessibility and inclusivity of public transport and pedestrian infrastructure.

Active Design (Sport England, supported by Active Travel England and the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities) sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives.

## **4.0 Areas of Concern**

### **Junction 1**

- Building a 'greenfield' road surrounded by new residential development warrants a 'gold standard' provision. Therefore, the footway/cycleway would benefit from being fully segregated on the south side of the junction.

- ATE notes that a 3-metre shared-use footway/cycleway would be provided, although this is only on the south side of the junction. Therefore, users cycling into the village from the south have no officially permitted route other than the road along Harmans Way.
- Cyclists cannot sensibly transition from Harmans Way shared-use cycleway to Britwell Road (north). ATE suggests extending the shared footway/cycleway to provide a continuous route.
- The footway width south of Britwell Road is 1.2 metres on drawing 0100 018 (Preliminary Design GA Composite Series Sheet 1 of 8). Therefore, the width does not comply with DfT Inclusive Mobility guidelines.

## **Junction 2**

- ATE considers it a missed opportunity not to continue the shared footway/cycleway along Cuxham Road to the Cuxham Roundabout and around the corner onto Willow Close. The current proposal requires cyclists to return to the carriageway to navigate the roundabout. Providing the route up to the roundabout would also future-proof the route and allow forthcoming connections.
- It is not apparent if the Redrow housing development allows for active travel linkages to the village centre via the existing residential road network, and Pyrton Lane appears to be unlit and of low utility. Further information is requested on the lighting that would be provided along Pyrton Lane.
- In addition, if no linkages are to be made, then the route via the Relief Road and Cuxham Road may be the preferred route - in which case terminating the protected route short of Willow Close (notwithstanding the 20mph speed limit) appears to be a missed opportunity.
- The drawing 0100 019 (Preliminary Design GA Composite Series Sheet 2 of 8) notes that there would be a fence along the edge of the 3-metre shared footway/cycleway along the Wallington Relief Road. LTN 1/20 Table 5-2 recommends additional width be provided for vertical features adjacent to cycleways.
- No connections appear to have been made to the footpath used by the Bloor Homes development. ATA considers this a missed opportunity to increase permeability and overall connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Drawing number 0100 020 of the layout of the Watlington relief road suggests that the shared use footway/cycleway does not continue to the northern footway of the Relief Road. There will therefore be no segregated cycle route from the housing areas to the north of the road to the proposed shared use path on the south side of the road along a busy stretch of road.

## **Junction 3**

- Pyrton Lane is likely to be a popular leisure route for cycling. The swept path of the cycle design vehicle appears to be difficult to negotiate between the proposed parallel crossing and the lane, especially when mixed with pedestrians and allowing for belisha poles. ATE considers whether a wider shared-use area could be provided on the north side, considering the desired line path between the crossing and the lane.

- Pyrton Lane is noted in the CPRE consultation response as a route likely to be used by horse riders. ATE does not have any data to understand whether there is a need to accommodate provision for equestrians, and in particular, specific provision for crossing the new relief road, but it requested that the Applicant consider this request further.
- Further information is requested on the bollards used on Pyrton Lane (illustrated in drawing 0100 021) at the relief road crossing to ensure they do not create an accessibility barrier.
- ATE does not know if the Providence housing development allows for active travel linkages to the village centre via the existing residential road network, and Pyrton Lane appears to be unlit and of low utility. If no linkages are to be made, then the route via Relief Road and Shirburn Rd may be the preferred route, in which case terminating the protected route short of Shirburn Rd appears to be a missed opportunity.
- ATE considers whether the proposed public right of way, coloured purple on drawing 0100 022, should be provided for shared use and the width increased to 3 metres to allow pedestrians and cyclists to use this route safely.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

This advice should be provided to the LPA case officer and forwarded to the agent and applicant. ATE would be content to review further submitted information to help address the above identified deficits; and with a view to providing a further response and recommended wording for planning conditions and obligations.