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Travel
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Your Ref: O/25/99506
Our Ref: ATE/25/01038/OUT
Date: 15 August 2025

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Eastleigh Borough Council

Application Ref: O/25/99506

Site Address: Navigator Quarter, Eastleigh, SO18 2NL

Description of development: Hybrid Planning Application - Outline application for development of the land adjacent to Southampton Airport to provide employment floorspace of up to 92,000 sqm (GIA) within Use Classes E(g) (ii & iii), B2 and B8 with ancillary offices and areas for service yards, car parking, landscaping, ancillary buildings and associated activities, and access from Wide Lane (all matters reserved except for access). Full planning application for initial infrastructure works and construction of new access road including site levelling and other engineering works. (EIA development)

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

Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this hybrid planning application.

It is understood that the site is allocated for employment use in Eastleigh Borough Council's (EBC) adopted Local Plan under Policies E7 and E9.

ATE has assessed the application against the criteria in our updated Planning Assessment Toolkit, national policy, and relevant active travel design guidance. It is noted that the applicant has undertaken their own assessment using the Toolkit, included within section 6 of the submitted Transport Assessment (TA). This is welcomed.

Following our review, several key issues require further consideration and underpin our recommendation for deferral. These are set out in detail below.

2.0 Summary

1.Trip Generation and Travel Planning

Trip Generation

It is understood that the TRICS database has been used to estimate trip rates using comparable developments. ATE does not have significant concerns with the methodology employed. However, reliance on 2011 Census data, particularly in the context of planning for new and improved active travel infrastructure and access to services, can be problematic in establishing a vision-led baseline for active modes, as envisaged in the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Whilst it is recognised that 2021 Census data also has limitations, ATE encourages the applicant to adopt a more ambitious baseline and to commit to further improvements over the monitoring period. Alternative sources, such as the National Travel Survey and TRICS data from alternative sites travel surveys, could support a forward-looking scenario, whilst acknowledging inherent limitations in sample size and geography.

In response to Criterion 1 of the ATE Toolkit (trip generation), the applicant notes the ATE Corporate Plan target of 50% of all short journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 and states this is a holistic, area-wide figure relating only to short journeys, not all trips.

ATE recognise this position and highlight that almost all rail and bus journeys include an active travel component to or from a station or stop. In relation to the infrastructure proposed, we note the Highway Authority's position that neither the design nor the delivery mechanism for appropriate northern connections nor improvements to pedestrian and cycle provision at Wide Lane Bridge have been agreed. Greater clarity is required on how these works will be funded and secured, and the implications for active travel should they not proceed, as they are necessary to support the sustainable transport vision for this site.

Travel Plan

The applicant states that interim surveys will inform the Full Travel Plan (FTP) and assist in identifying site-specific measures to reduce car use and encourage sustainable modes.

While this is noted, ATE's preference is for specific, measurable targets to reduce vehicle trips and increase sustainable travel mode share to be set at this stage.

ATE expects a measurable reduction in vehicle trips over a five-year monitoring period from first occupation, alongside an increase in sustainable mode share. Targets should be clearly set out at the outset, in line with the vision-led approach promoted in NPPF paragraph 118, to support ambition and avoid the entrenchment of unsustainable travel behaviours.

2. Accessibility

Walkable neighbourhoods are generally defined as those where key services can be accessed within a 10-minute walk (approximately 800 m), as set out in the National Design Guide and the NPPF. Whilst distances up to 2 km may be acceptable in some cases, they are unrealistic for many users, particularly children and people with limited mobility.

The applicant's Table 6.2 in the Transport Assessment (TA) lists nearby amenities. It is disappointing that the site is not within 800 m of any existing amenities; several are, however, within 2 km. For a development of this scale and type, it is essential that public transport and opportunities to purchase food are within convenient walking distance.

The nearest rail station is 1,600 m away, which is considered acceptable. However, the nearest bus stop is 1,700 m from the site. Although 400 m is the typical benchmark for bus stop accessibility (most often applied to residential developments), provision within easy reach of this site is likely to discourage private vehicle use.

It is therefore welcomed that the applicant intends to provide a bus stop outside Unit 12 in the South Plot, subject to the Highway Authority's satisfaction. However, the Highway Authority's 8 August 2025 response identifies concerns:

- Uncertainty over whether service U1C will be diverted to the proposed bus stop.
- If diverted, it would only provide direct access from Southampton, not from the north.
- No direct pedestrian link between the southern and northern plots to conveniently access the stop.

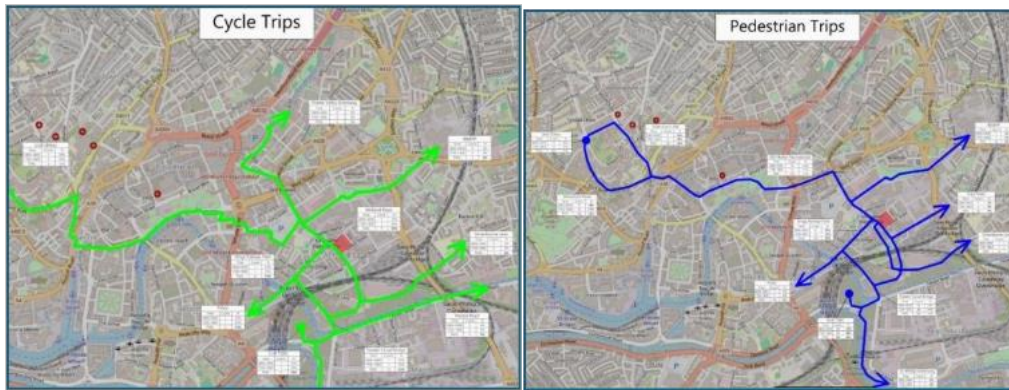
These matters must be resolved to address accessibility gaps. Local bus stops should offer good natural surveillance, seating, lighting, shelter, real-time information, and raised boarding kerbs.

3. Active Travel Route Audit

An Active Travel Route Audit has been undertaken, with two routes identified from the site access points. ATE does not object to the choice of routes but notes that potential off-site improvements should not be limited to these given the likely catchment of trips.

To strengthen the audit, the following should be included:

- A map clearly showing each route. (see below examples)
- Photographs cross-referenced to map locations as well as deficiencies.



The current assessment is largely descriptive and lacks critical analysis. Whilst national guidance is referenced in the TA, it is not applied within the audit itself. For example, the presence of a National Cycle Network route does not guarantee compliance with LTN 1/20 in terms of layout, pedestrian/vehicle, flows and speeds, yet this analysis is absent and could potentially be misleading.

ATE also notes the Highway Authority's comments regarding access and contributions, which should be incorporated into the route audit, as well as consideration of how the Local Cycling and Walking Audit (LCWIP) improvements interact with the routes chosen. This is supported.

4. Off-Site Infrastructure

Wide Lane Bridge

ATE notes the Highway Authority's detailed comments on the need to secure improved pedestrian and cycle provision across Wide Lane Bridge and ATE supports this position. This is a key access route to the site.

The appropriateness of shared-use facilities should be carefully considered, in line with Figure 4.1 and Part 6.5 of LTN 1/20 given current ped/cycle flows. A separate active travel bridge may be more suitable to support shared use, provided it meets the needs of cycle traffic in terms of width, gradients, and access transitions, in accordance with section 10.8 of LTN 1/20. The current design falls somewhat short in terms widths.

External Connection to Chickenhall Lane / Bishopstoke Road

ATE considers this connection to be essential. Whilst Policy E9 of the Local Plan anticipates the provision of a new Chickenhall Lane link road, the Highway Authority has presented sound justification for securing an active travel link at this location. Such a link would deliver significant public benefits and, importantly, provide an opportunity to enhance active travel to a much wider catchment and improve accessibility to the site in support of its role as a commercial development, thereby meeting the objectives set out within the Travel Plan. Steps should therefore be taken to secure this link.

By providing this connection, the proposals would help ensure compliance with NPPF policies 96a, 115, and 117, which seek to secure sufficient connectivity and accessibility for all modes, with a clear priority given to pedestrians and cyclists. The implications for

journey times and catchment opportunities should be provided should the connection not be delivered.

The following improvements have been identified in Paragraph 6.70 of the TA. Where comments are considered necessary by ATE, they have been provided:

1. The pedestrian footway along the western side of Mitchell Way upgraded from the current footway to a 3m wide shared-use footway/ cycleway.

Generally ATE do not support shared use infrastructure. Off-site cycling infrastructure should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive in line with the five core design principles and geometric requirements in LTN 1/20 (see Sections 4.2 and 5). Ideally, well-used cycle and pedestrian linkages should not be reliant on shared use routes in full or intermittently, which conflicts with the government's clear position in paragraph 1.6.1 (2) of LTN 1/20 that cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians.

2. Shared-use footway cycleway merge into a segregated cycle and pedestrian

Segregation will significantly improve the legibility, safety, and overall attractiveness for those considering walking, wheeling, or cycling, in line with Figure 4.1 of LTN 1/20. However, consideration should be given to the current intention to deliver these as two-way tracks on one side of the highway, rather than as single-direction tracks on either side. Paragraph 6.2.16 of LTN 1/20 highlights several potential issues associated with two-way cycle tracks, all of which should be carefully addressed as part of these proposals. This approach may also assist in managing land availability constraints which have led to shared use approaches.

All shared-use and segregated cycle infrastructure should be designed to meet the specific needs of cycle traffic, particularly in relation to side road treatments and the provision of priority for both pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.

Other matters

- *Wide Lane / Mitchell Way / George Curl Way Roundabout:* Existing pedestrian and cycle crossings are poor and should be improved to align with desire lines.

Possible improvements could include

Side road zebra: [see example](#)

Signalised roundabout crossing: [see example](#)

- *Southampton Airport Parkway footbridges:* It is understood that Southampton Airport Parkway Rail Station can be accessed directly via stairs and ramps from the western side of Mitchell Way, with two footbridges providing access to the northbound platforms. The northern footbridge is equipped with lift facilities. Further clarification would be welcomed on how this connection will be integrated into the proposals, including any potential constraints or issues affecting its ongoing use.
- *Itchen Way:* The assertion that the ecological impact of providing a connection from the site would outweigh the benefits is not supported by any ecological evidence or feasibility assessment.

The NPPF is clear that “Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks, including National Trails” (paragraph 105).

Whilst it is accepted that the Itchen Way in its entirety may not be feasible as an alternative utility route for active travel, there is a clear opportunity to enhance access in connection with these proposals, given its proximity to the site boundary. The potential for a low-impact, ecologically sensitive access should therefore be explored.

5. Master planning and Permeability

ATE notes that the Highway Authority has sufficiently addressed this matter and endorses their commentary regarding layout and permeability.

It is noted that there are no pedestrian or cycle routes through the site other than those following the primary vehicular corridors. There is merit in considering an alternative route that is separated from the highway, providing safe and coherent access to the northern connection beneath the railway line and connecting the two land parcels.

Where footways or cycleways run adjacent to the highway, improvements should be made to enhance provision for pedestrians and cyclists by incorporating side road treatments to maintain priority and continuity for vulnerable road users. Reference should be made to LTN 1/20 Figure 10.13: *Priority crossings of cycle tracks at side roads*.

6. Cycle Parking

High-quality, accessible cycle parking is essential to meet national policy requirements and Travel Plan objectives. Provision should comply with local standards or, in their absence, with Section 11 of LTN 1/20.

Key principles include:

- Secure, sheltered, and conveniently located parking near building entrances.
- Step-free access with minimal door transitions.
- Facilities for non-standard cycles (minimum 5%).
- Supporting amenities such as showers, lockers (one per cycle space), and repair facilities.

Car parking should be minimised to avoid incentivising car use. Where end-users are unknown, cycle parking and associated facilities should be secured by planning condition or design code to ensure delivery.

3.0 Next Steps

We request that these recommendations are 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 deficiencies, with a view to providing a further response and recommended wording for planning conditions and obligations.