



Active
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Your Ref: PL/2026/02966
Our Ref: ATE/26/00859/OUT
Date: 26 June 2026

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Wiltshire Council

Application Ref: PL/2026/02966

Site Address: BLACKMORE FARM, 287 SANDRIDGE ROAD NORTHEAST
TO SANDRIDGE HILL, SANDRIDGE COMMON, SN12 7QS

Description of development: Outline planning application for the erection of up to 275 dwellings (including affordable housing), associated infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity enhancements, with all matters reserved except for the main access from Sandridge Common

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

- a. **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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application. This is Active Travel England's (ATE) first involvement with this site. However, ATE has previously responded to the following planning applications within the immediate vicinity:

- PL/2023/11188 – Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS (land immediately west of the application site). ATE issued a Deferral response.
- PL/2024/07097 – Land South of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12 7QP (land immediately south of the application site). ATE issued a Deferral response.
- PL/2024/10345 – Land north of the A3102, Melksham (land to the north-west of the application site). ATE initially issued a Deferral, which subsequently led to a conditional approval.

Given the close relationship between this proposal and the surrounding committed and emerging development sites, it is essential they are delivered as a connected community rather than as a series of isolated schemes. This is particularly important in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Paragraph 117(a) of the NPPF requires that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the site and with neighbouring areas.

Furthermore, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires decision-makers to consider the residual cumulative impacts of development. This extends beyond highway capacity and safety to ensuring that cumulative consented developments are integrated through coherent and connected active travel infrastructure.

ATE understands that the land immediately west of the application site benefits from outline planning permission for up to 500 dwellings and employment land (PL/2023/11188). It is also understood that this land is within the applicant's ownership.

Given the existence of this adjacent consent, ATE does not consider it necessary to revisit the principle of development, instead, focusing on ensuring a comprehensive masterplanned community is delivered rather than in a piecemeal manner that prejudices future active travel connectivity.

The key matters relevant to this application are therefore set out below.

2.0 Areas of Concern

Connectivity with the Consented Site

The Design and Access Statement explains that an all-vehicle connection is proposed into the consented development at the northern end of the site. This would enable a future bus service associated with the consented development to pass through the application site.

Within the southern part of the site, a further vehicular connection is proposed with the aim of maximising permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly towards Bridleway MELW41 at Snarlton Farm.

ATE does not consider the information submitted sufficient to demonstrate that appropriate pedestrian and cycle connectivity/permeability between the two developments will be secured.

Further detail is required regarding the proposed boundary treatment between this application site and PL/2023/11188. Both sites benefit from close proximity to an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, and every opportunity should be taken to maximise permeability.

In particular, Public Footpath MELW26 passes between the two development parcels and presents an opportunity to establish a continuous active travel spine connecting southwards into the wider rights of way network, facilitating strategic walking and cycling routes towards Eastern Way and beyond.

ATE would not support a scheme that results in a physical or functional barrier between the application site and the consented development, as this would conflict with Paragraph 117(a) of the NPPF.

The submitted Illustrative Masterplan provides limited confidence that sufficient future connections will be safeguarded. ATE therefore requests that a Movement and Access Parameter Plan be submitted at this stage to secure future pedestrian and cycle connections through the Reserved Matters process. Further information regarding the proposed boundary treatment should also be provided.

Connectivity with the Public Rights of Way Network

MELW40

The Illustrative Masterplan identifies proposed key pedestrian routes connecting towards Bridleway MELW40. However, no Movement and Access Parameter Plan has been submitted and, consequently, the Illustrative Masterplan alone does not provide sufficient certainty that these connections will be delivered as it is not an approved plan.

ATE requests either detailed plans showing the proposed connection points or, as a minimum, a parameter plan capable of being secured through condition to ensure that these links are delivered at Reserved Matters stage.

MELW41

The Illustrative Masterplan indicates proposed pedestrian routes extending towards the south-east corner of the site. However, these routes terminate internally and do not clearly connect to Bridleway MELW41.

The applicant should clarify whether a direct connection to MELW41 is proposed in this location.

ATE notes that, as part of planning permission PL/2023/11188, a shared pedestrian and cycle route along Bridleway MELW41 was secured through Condition 9 of the Decision Notice. This application should seek to provide equivalent connections/plans and secure any necessary improvements to MELW41 to ensure continuity between the developments. The submission includes a Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment Review (WCHAR), which is welcomed. However, much of the assessment relies upon future connections through PL/2023/11188. Furthermore, the southern routes along MELW41 do not intersect the application site's red line boundary, reducing confidence that the assessed routes can actually be delivered. Consequently, ATE considers the assessment to be incomplete.

Proposed Access from the A3102 (Drawing ITB12069-GA-066F)

The Active Travel England Assessment states:

"The proposed footway improvement on Sandridge Common, as described in Section 6, is designed having regard to Inclusive Mobility, Manual for Streets and LTN 1/20. Mechanisms for delivery of the proposed infrastructure are identified."

ATE has reviewed the proposed site access arrangements and does not consider them to fully accord with LTN 1/20.

The proposal provides only a 2-metre footway along Sandridge Common Road, a 40mph A road. This does not constitute appropriate cycling infrastructure for the traffic conditions. The applicant should therefore explicitly acknowledge that this element of the design does not comply with the recommendations of LTN 1/20.

ATE is also disappointed that the Road Safety Audit primarily identifies concern with potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists at the junction, rather than recognising the more significant safety risks arising from interactions between vulnerable road users and motor vehicles. Given the vehicle speeds, traffic volumes and the termination of the shared-use facility, these represent the principal design concerns.

The Transport Assessment records a seven-day Automatic Traffic Count undertaken in July 2025. Table 3.3 identifies two-way traffic flows of approximately 764 vehicles during the AM peak and 818 vehicles during the PM peak at the site frontage. Daily traffic flows are therefore likely to exceed 8,000 vehicles.

Table 3.4 records 85th percentile vehicle speeds of:

- Eastbound: 42.3–43.3 mph
- Westbound: 40.5–41.6 mph

The relevant guidance is contained within Figure 4.1 of LTN 1/20, which identifies the appropriate cycling provision according to traffic speed and volume.

The combination of high traffic volumes and 85th percentile speeds exceeding 40mph places this route as suitable for few people and excluding most users.

The absence of such infrastructure along Sandridge Common Road reinforces the importance of maximising connectivity to the surrounding Public Rights of Way network and ensuring comprehensive pedestrian and cycle links across adjacent development parcels. Off-carriageway connections will be important to provide safe, coherent and attractive active travel routes in accordance with national policy and guidance.

3.0 Next Steps

ATE requests that the local planning authority shares this response with the applicant's agent. We would welcome additional details and amendments in line with the above comments, with a view to providing a further response/appropriate wording for conditions as required.