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Your Ref: PL/2026/03545
Our Ref: ATE/26/00941/OUT
Date: 20 July 2026

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

From: Spatial Planning Division, Active Travel England

To: Wiltshire Council

Application Ref: PL/2026/03545

Site Address: Land East of Showell Farm, Chippenham,, Wiltshire

Description of development:

Outline Planning Application for up to 400 dwellings (Class C3 use), land for a Local Centre, accommodating commercial, business and service uses (Class E use), drinking establishment and hot food takeaway (Sui Generis); and local community uses (Class F2); open space and landscaping to include natural green space, amenity green space, area of formal play, allotments and community orchard, sustainable drainage infrastructure and ground remodelling. All matters reserved except for the formation of a new vehicular access and cycle and pedestrian access including emergency access onto the B4528.

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. Overview and Recommendations

- 1.1. Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the above submitted outline planning application. It is understood that the proposed site is not allocated in Wiltshire Council's Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, although the site was proposed for allocation as part of an Emerging Local Plan, which has been withdrawn. The proposals, if approved, are expected to accommodate a new community of around 1,000 people¹. ATE has provided input previously on outline application (PL/2023/04417) at this location, however, that application was withdrawn by the applicant. ATE's response (dated 04/07/2023) outlined its principal concern of the significant reliance placed upon future infrastructure, services and facilities associated with the Rowden Park urban extension, without sufficient evidence that these would be delivered in a timeframe capable of supporting a healthy and active community. Since that application was submitted, Rowden Park has progressed sufficiently to assess the current application.
- 1.2. Similar to the previous application, these proposals do not currently demonstrate that walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport have been prioritised as the most attractive and practical choices for everyday journeys, in accordance with **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 117**. Whilst the proposed development will benefit from connections to existing and planned active travel networks associated with nearby permitted developments, insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that key strategic routes will deliver a safe, direct, comfortable and attractive experience for all users, in accordance with **NPPF paragraph 115**. The absence of a comprehensive mode share assessment and clear targets further limits ATE's ability to assess whether the proposed transport strategy would achieve the clear mode share targets sought by **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 3 (CWIS3)**.
- 1.3. ATE recommends the applicant undertake the following, to ensure the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms for active travel:
 - Revise the Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan to ensure a robust evidence base for sustainable transport modes, equivalent to that utilised for vehicles, and establish ambitious mode shift targets at the outline stage which align with national targets within **CWIS3**.
 - Provide a qualitative assessment of walking and cycling infrastructure routes to be provided along key corridors (as identified at TA Figure 8.1), ensuring that these routes are suitable for the majority of users (in line with **Rural Design Guide Tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3**). Where gaps in provision or opportunities to improve connectivity are identified, propose contributions or works to secure improvements.
 - Ensure that routes within the proposed development are delivered to a high-quality standard, in accordance with **Rural Design Guide Tables 4-1 and 4-2**, to ensure accessibility for all users.
 - Provide an assessment of public transport usage for the proposed development, and work with Wiltshire Council to secure appropriate

¹ Based on data from Household and resident characteristics, England, and Wales: Census 2021

contributions for improved public transport services, and access to bus stops at the frontage of the proposed development.

- Secure cycle parking, either through design code or via condition, at the outline stage.

2. Planning Application Assessment

Trip Generation, Trip Assignment and Mode Shares

- 2.1. The applicant's approach to active travel trip generation, distribution and assignment is generally sound, however, there are significant concerns regarding the consistency and appropriateness of the data utilised. The applicant has utilised "Business Park" as part of its dataset for active travel trips (TA Table 8.1), which is inconsistent with its dataset utilised for vehicle trip generation. The applicant has also utilised an inconsistent baseline, with National Travel Survey (NTS) 2021 used for active travel trip distribution and assignment, and NTS 2015/2019 data used for vehicle trip distribution and assignment. ATE considers that a consistent evidence base should be applied across all transport modes, prioritising sustainable modes in accordance with **NPPF paragraph 109**, with NTS 2024 representing the most appropriate and up-to-date dataset available. Furthermore, the applicant has not provided public transport trip generation, and therefore it is difficult to understand the overall transport impacts of the development and whether sufficient public transport enhancements are required.
- 2.2. The applicant's Travel Plan outlines initial targets; however, these do not meet the applicant's own definition of SMART targets, and cannot be relied upon as an effective mechanism for monitoring behavioural change. There is no consideration of contingency measures, interventions or additional mitigation should these targets not be achieved.

Off-site Infrastructure (Active Travel)

- 2.3. The proposed development's off-site, active travel infrastructure is heavily reliant on infrastructure to be delivered through other permitted developments, creating a dependency on third-party schemes for the success of the site's active travel network, as shown at TA Figure 5.1 and TA Figure 5.5. The applicant, in its trip distribution and assignment for active travel (TA Figure 8.1) identified that 58% of trips are likely to be routed via Rowden Park (14/12118/OUT), which is located on the proposed development's northern boundary, and the Avon Valley Walk. Rowden Park will provide a network of, in the majority, 3m shared footpath and cycleways with some routes being solely footpaths, or informal footpaths. Public Right of Way "CHIP1" provides a direct connection from the proposed development to the town centre, however, is currently designated to be an informal footpath as part of the Rowden Park Access & Movement Parameter Plan, forcing users to a more indirect route, thereby reducing its attractiveness and network permeability. Active travel accesses are provided across the site, and some off-site improvements are to be delivered, as outlined at Figure 6.3, which would provide links between the site's boundary and Chippenham Town Centre.
- 2.4. Given the strategic importance of these routes to the applicant's forecast active travel movements, ATE considers it essential that they are delivered to a high standard of design and construction, providing attractive, comfortable and safe

journeys through the year. TA 5.4.7 notes “improvements to the route between Rowden Park and town centre including surfacing and lighting where achievable”, and TA 5.4.11 notes that “generally, this network provides streetlights, footways and pedestrian crossing facilities.” However, given the lack of natural surveillance on this route, and its strategic importance, the provision of continuous, high-quality lighting and all-weather surfaced routes, as well steps taken to maximise visibility, provide sufficient escape routes and avoid narrow paths where possible (as per **Rural Design Guide, Section 4.7**) is necessary to ensure their attractiveness and usability for all users, including those travelling after dark, and fulfil the requirements of **NPPF paragraph 115**. If this cannot be achieved via this routing, alternative routes should be assessed and contributed towards.

- 2.5. Whilst significant focus has been placed on this north-east connection by the applicant, little consideration has been given to connections to the west, which the applicant forecasts will attract 21% of active travel trips. The applicant notes (TA 8.2.8) that this is highlighted in the **Chippenham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** (Routes CC10, CC11 and CC15), however, no contribution is proposed towards it. ATE considers improvements to these western connections, including the Saltersford Lane corridor and railway tunnel, to be a priority mitigation requirement.

Masterplanning

- 2.6. TA 5.5.3 notes that Public Right of Way LC039 will be routed through natural green space, and its 3m construction will be undertaken using compacted hoggins, providing access to the country park. Given its strategic function as a movement corridor, the route should be designed to accommodate year-round use by all users. Whilst initially cheaper to install, these materials require significantly greater levels of inspection and maintenance in the long term. Walking and cycling routes serving key destinations should therefore be constructed to a high-quality bound standard unless a robust justification can be provided otherwise.
- 2.7. The Parameter Plan outlines the applicant's approach to proposed land uses, and ATE has assessed this against the Draft Design and Placemaking PPG principles of good design:
- **Liveability & Public Space:** Incorporation of the local centre within the centre of the development (e.g. in proximity to the formal play area or village green), would create a focal point that supports trip internalisation, social cohesion and access to local services.
 - **Nature:** where possible, green infrastructure should be overlooked, providing natural surveillance, improving perceptions of safety and supporting increased use of walking and cycling routes through the day and evening.

Off-site Infrastructure (Public Transport)

- 2.8. TA 5.7.6 proposes that the applicant contribute the same sum of money per dwelling as that of Rowden Park and Showell Nurseries developments, and that the 44H bus service is extended along Patterdown Road, to the frontage of the proposed development. The applicant has not provided trip generation for public transport users, so it is difficult to gauge usage at this stage, however, ATE considers that the level of public transport contribution should be informed by

forecast demand generated by the development, and should be sufficient to secure attractive, frequent bus services from first occupation, supporting a meaningful mode shift away from private car usage.

- 2.9. The applicant has failed to properly consider access to the bus stops and laybys, with both being accessible via the primary street. ATE recommends providing a separate active travel route, directly to these stops, via the proposed development, as well as a parallel crossing in proximity to the bus stops, to accord with pedestrian desire lines. New bus stops at this location should be delivered in accordance with the design principles outlined in **LTN (Local Transport Note) 1/24 (Bus User Priority) Section 6**.

Cycle Parking and Trip-End Facilities.

- 2.10. TA 7.8.1 sets out that parking provision will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage. ATE recommends that, given that these requirements directly influence building design and layouts (as set out in **LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design) paragraph 11.1.4**), establishing them at the outline stage, and ensuring that provision is provided in line with **LTN 1/20 Table 11-1**, would avoid later disagreement, and should be secured by condition or through the approved design code.