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**LPA Reference:** 23/02094/FULMAJ

**ATE Reference:** ATE/23/00625/FULL

**Site Address:** THE MALL, THE KENNET CENTRE, NEWBURY, RG14 5EN

**Proposal:** Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre comprising the partial demolition of the existing building on site and the development of new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and residents ancillary facilities; commercial, business and service floorspace including office (Class E (a, b, c, d, e, f, and g)); access, parking, and cycle parking; landscaping and open space; sustainable energy installations; associated works, and alterations to the retained Vue Cinema and multi storey car park.

**ATE Case Officer:** William Everson

**ATE Case Officer Email:** [william.everson@activetravelengland.gov.uk](mailto:william.everson@activetravelengland.gov.uk)

Thank you for your email

Active Travel England, after reviewing the submitted proposals and their potential impact has provided a detailed response containing specific recommendations. Please find attached the following:

- Covering Letter (Executive Summary)
- Planning Application Assessment Toolkit Summary Report

*ATE would like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice, in addition to being notified of committee dates for this application.*

Kind regards



**Development Management Team**

Active Travel England

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Your Ref: 23/02094/FULMAJ  
Our Ref: ATE/23/00625/FULL  
Date: 20 March 2024

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: West Berkshire Council

**Application Ref:** 23/02094/FULMAJ

**Site Address:** THE MALL, THE KENNET CENTRE, NEWBURY, RG14 5EN

**Description of development:** Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre comprising the partial demolition of the existing building on site and the development of new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and residents ancillary facilities; commercial, business and service floorspace including office (Class E (a, b, c, d, e, f, and g)); access, parking, and cycle parking; landscaping and open space; sustainable energy installations; associated works, and alterations to the retained Vue Cinema and multi storey car park.

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 full planning application for the redevelopment of Kennet shopping centre (the site) in Newbury Town Centre.

ATE have previously submitted two responses to this application, dated 16 October 2023 and 22 January 2024 Ref: ATE/23/00625/FULL, which focused on the following themes:

- Layout and permeability
- Offsite improvements and wider connectivity
- Cycle parking
- Travel plan

In both instances ATE issued a deferral response.

## 2.0 Summary

ATE note that since issuing the previous consultation response a direct 'Response to Active Travel England Comments' has been issued. ATE is grateful to the applicant for the time taken to prepare this response, following a review of which, ATE is now in a position to recommend that application is approved, subject to a number of planning conditions.

For clarity, a position has been provided for each of the original themes below.

## 3.0 Areas of Concern

### Layout and permeability:

Concern was raised that '*Cycles will not be permitted to use the new pedestrian street through the development, instead they will be encouraged to use the existing road network around the site.*'

The applicant has reconfirmed that cyclists will not be permitted to use the centralised street through the development as this route would be for pedestrians only and used for cafes, restaurants and retail. Cyclists will instead be expected to use the existing road network around the site, including the proposed cycle lane on Bartholomew Street. According to the applicant this approach has been discussed and agreed with officers at West Berkshire Council.

Whilst it remains likely that cyclist will utilise the internal route, the pedestrian only rationale is accepted and ATE is content with opportunities for both pedestrians and cyclists to either move within or around the development. The provision of new cycle infrastructure along Bartholomew Street will be an important alternative for cyclists within the area and is welcomed, subject to design improvements.

### Offsite improvements and wider connectivity:

ATE queried why the previous applications submitted on the site (21/00380/FULMAJ and 21/00379/FULMAJ) showed a zebra crossing over Market Street, but the submission documents associated with the new proposals did not include this.

The applicant has confirmed that the zebra crossing has been removed from the proposals. Instead, the existing pedestrian crossing to the east of the MSCP on Market Street that includes tactile paving with a central refuge is identified. This was reinstated to suit the new footway alignment forming part of the Market Street s278 works. On balance, it is considered that this provision presents a suitable facility for pedestrians. Thus, ATE have no further concerns regarding this matter.

### *Cycle lane on Bartholomew Street*

ATE understand that this new provision was proposed following a request from the Highway Authority. ATE welcomed this provision however raised concerns regarding;

- The provision terminating in advance of the junction with Market Street; and
- Whether the cycle path would benefit from commencing at the junction with Mansion House Street to avoid conflict with vehicles travelling north along Bartholomew Street.

The applicant has explained that the cycle lane is proposed to terminate to the north of the undercroft car park entrance. *'From here cyclists would route south along Bartholomew Street, via the new southbound section of carriageway, which is provided to facilitate access to/from the undercroft car park. The section of new southbound carriageway would only be used by vehicles routing to/from the new underground car park and is therefore expected to be lightly trafficked and suitable for use by both cyclists and motor vehicles (mainly cars). As requested, consideration will be given to starting the cycle lane further north, i.e. at the Mansion House Street junction. If feasible an updated drawing will be provided for comment.'*

The inclusion of a southbound cycle lane, shown in Appendix I of the Transport Assessment Addendum along Bartholomew Street is supported. There is however concern that cyclists travelling south will inadvertently join the northbound carriageway where the cycle lane terminates and tapers. It will therefore be important to ensure finalised designs appropriately guide cyclists towards the southbound carriageway, rather than into the path of oncoming traffic.

The finalised designs will ultimately be agreed with the Highway Authority and thus ATE have recommended wording for a planning condition to secure updated drawings/designs to be submitted at an appropriate time, should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve.

### Cycle Parking:

ATE were previously content with cycle parking arrangements and this position is maintained.

### Travel Plan:

ATE noted that a baseline split for walking and cycling modes within either the main body of the Travel Plan or Transport Assessment was not apparent.

The applicant has now provided modal a split from the 2011 and 2021 Census as well as a baseline modal split for walking and cycling journeys to work. Whilst the baseline modal share targets for walking and cycling is low, it is welcome that *'The Travel Plan will aim to increase the number of residents walking and cycling from the baseline'*. Given the sites sustainable town centre location, there should be little reason for most users to be reliant

on a private motor vehicle. ATE have no further comments to make on this matter, subject to inclusion of the planning condition wording.

#### **4.0 Recommended Planning Conditions and Obligations / Reasons for Refusal**

Formal Planning Conditions have not been drafted; however, recommendations have been put forward with regards to their content below.

Bartholomew Street Improvement Scheme:

1. The Bartholomew Street Improvement Scheme should be designed in accordance with LTN1/20 / local guidance to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority, full details of which should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development and be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation.

Travel Plan:

2. Prior to first occupation of the development, a Residential Travel Plan comprising immediate, continuing and long-term measures to promote and prioritise alternatives to private vehicular use, which shall include clear objectives and modal share targets for walking and cycling for years 1, 3 and 5, together with a time-bound programme of implementation, monitoring, regular review and interventions (in the event of a failure to meet modal share targets) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Travel Plan(s) shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the agreed Travel Plan measures and targets to the satisfaction of the council.

#### **5.0 Next Steps**

It is requested 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 as appropriate.