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Your Ref: 2025/0997
Our Ref: ATE/25/01911/OUT
Date: 08 January 2026

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

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Application Ref: 2025/0997

Site Address: LOW VALLEY FARM, PITT STREET, DARFIELD, BARNSLEY, S73 8AX

Description of development: Demolition of existing structures and outline planning application for up to 200 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. All matters except for means of access to, but not within, the site to be reserved.

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.

Background and summary
ATE welcomes the opportunity to comment on an outline proposal (all matters reserved except access) for up to 200 homes at Low Valley Farm, Pitt Street, Barnsley.

The site is located within Barnsley, South Yorkshire and as such comes under the SYMCA walking and cycling strategy, adopted in 2025. This aims to see 65% of children walk or cycle to school, and 45% of all short journeys in South Yorkshire to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2035. Specific infrastructure strategies are located on page 51 and ATE expects development in South Yorkshire to consider the goals and approaches outlined in this strategy.

The NPPF para109 requires developments to use a "vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places."

This site has good active travel potential, particularly for school and shopping journeys, although has limited active travel potential for employment and long distance multimodal or intercity journeys. ATE expects the applicant to consider these factors in order to maximise the potential of the site, and mitigate the limitations as much as possible.

Trip generation assignment and mode shares.
ATE welcomes the daily trip generations for pedestrians and cyclists. ATE requires trip assignment figures in order to establish where and how people are most likely to travel and the likely number of trips this development would generate. This should be done across the entire day to take into account

all types of journeys not just commuting which is especially important with the nearby schools. This is needed in order to understand the expected demand for active travel provision and to ensure the provided infrastructure is sufficient.

ATE notes the walking route audit has been carried out using a recognised tool. ATE invites the applicant to consider what can be done to address the shortfalls identified and believes that whilst a WRAT score of 70% is good, that any deficiencies should still be corrected. This should be supported by trip assignment data which will outline the routes most in need of attention. ATE also requests an audit for cycling be completed for the most common destinations by bike.

Whilst the travel plan indicates a target of 10% reduction in single occupancy car trips, this is lacking both ambition and context for active travel. The TP should include the desired modal share of all modes, taking into account government targets for 50% of journeys within towns and cities to be walked and cycled by 2030 as per the DfT's Cycling Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) updated 2023. ATE requests the applicant to consider a wide range of incentives, including financial and greater focus on wayfinding changes for active travel. It is encouraged to consider a travel plan target for school travel as this site represents an opportunity to deliver on this metric. If the travel plan has not been met, there should be consideration as to why this has not happened, and appropriate remedial measures in addition to the proposed time extension. The travel plan should be secured by an appropriate condition.

Off site infrastructure
Walking
ATE considers the site location to be reasonable, being located 10 minutes (700m) from the nearest primary school, 5 minutes (350m) from the nearest secondary school. The site does suffer from limited access to employment in the surrounding area however. The pedestrian crossing route to Netherwood Academy should be safeguarded and secured by an appropriate condition as per the LHA requirements. The nearest convenience store is 10 minutes (800m) away, and the nearest large supermarket is 20 minutes (1.3km away.) Walking routes are provided to all the above destinations, but ATE encourages the applicant to consider whether any improvements can be provided, particularly to action deficiencies found in the walking route audit. ATE notes the walking route towards Darfield is narrow and appears to be obstructed by parked cars. This is particularly a concern as it is the main route to the nearest primary school. This is likely to cause problems for those with push chairs or wheeled mobility devices as the footpath is already narrower than the 2.0m minimum width outlined in Inclusive Mobility (4.2), and cars parking on the pavement reduces this further. ATE notes that footpaths constrained by parked cars is a specified issue in SYMCA's Walking Wheeling and Cycling strategy, as such consideration should be given to address this.

Darfield and Wombwell are both considered 'walking zones' as part of SYMCA's Walking, Wheeling and Cycling strategy, which should be reflected in the infrastructure and targets.

Cycling
The site is located within cycling distance of a wide range of facilities including schools and shops. Access is provided to the Trans Pennine Trail however this is unlikely to be useful for utility cycling as it is gravel and unlit. The bridleway down the side of Netherwood Academy provides a safe, low traffic route to access the TPT and Wombwell whilst avoiding Bradberry Balk Lane. This is welcomed, although ATE would expect that the crossing by the site will include cyclists in order to create a safe and coherent route here (as per LTN 1/20.) ATE would also encourage the applicant to undertake improvements to wayfinding/signage particularly in this area to make it clear this is a viable route to Wombwell. ATE recommends this be secured by an appropriate condition as it will benefit all users travelling from Darfield to Wombwell. The cycling route towards Darfield via Pitt Street is an area of concern as it is a mixed traffic road with parked cars, which should be investigated to improve cycling safety.
Pitt Street appears to feature on SYMCA's desired cycling maps (although this is not particularly clear.) ATE would encourage the applicant to consider whether any changes can be made to make this route more suitable, or to provide an alternative LTN 1/20 compliant cycle route into Darfield.

ATE would encourage the applicant to discuss whether additional cycle parking at the station would be possible with Northern Rail. ATE would also encourage the use of cycle lockers to provide secure options. ATE notes there appears to be no cycle parking facilities for nearby amenities (with the exception of Wombwell Station and Netherwood Academy.) This includes all shopping options which

are within reasonable cycling distance, such as the Lidl supermarket located 1.3km from the site which is extremely disappointing. ATE suggests that this be evaluated as part of the cycling audit to determine whether contributions can be made to improve this, particularly within the town centres of Darfield/Wombwell. This should be informed by the trip assignment figures.

Public transport

The site is further than 400m away from stops on George Street. However, the proposed connection to Lombard Crescent would allow the access of closer bus stops on Upperwood Road. These provide a much faster journey to Barnsley Centre compared to the 27 from George Street (25mins vs 1hr) as well as connections to Doncaster. The stops on George Street are missing a shelter for northbound services. ATE would like to see this added, along with real time information displays for both directions. ATE considers these improvements particularly significant since the bus stops are over 400m from the site entrance and further from most of the buildings. Currently this is served approximately once per hour and ATE would like to see discussions take place with the bus operators regarding service frequency and timetabling for both the 27/a/b and 219 buses. Whilst this is a matter for the operators and the council, ATE considers the use of 'clock face' timetabling to be beneficial for passengers so they know when to expect their next bus, but use of this should not lead to a decrease in service from today. There is no nearby railway station, the nearest at Wombwell requires a 40+ minute walk, 15 minute cycle or a bus journey with significant walking. ATE is sceptical of the value this provides without improvements to cycle or bus provision. Passengers taking a bus are better off using the 219 bus to connect in Barnsley rather than use Wombwell station in most cases.

ATE also considers reviewing whether kerb improvements could be made for the bus stops on both Upperwood Lane and George Street to be important to improve accessibility.

Masterplanning and permeability

ATE considers a link to Lombard Crescent essential for site permeability and requests the applicant safeguard this link at this stage. ATE also requests the applicant investigate whether another more southerly link can be provided into the neighbouring site to the east to facilitate walking and cycling trips. (see attached picure)



This would reduce walking distance from homes on the eastern side of the site when heading towards Darfield and further reduces the need to walk along the busy Pitt Street. Whilst it is accepted this is an

outline application. ATE encourages the applicant to provide as much site permeability as possible. Whilst this is generally done well in the outline drawings, ATE questions the lack of walking connections between some driveways and paths. ATE believes this can be done without affecting privacy or encouraging the use of these driveways as cut throughs, whilst still allowing better access for the homes along them. If it is likely that a particular driveway will be used as a cut through it should be re designated as a road or redesigned. ATE discourages any design that requires pedestrians and cyclists to take a longer route than is necessary and suggest that the desired active travel network inform eventual land ownership and not the other way around. The site access should include an appropriate dropped kerb or side road priority treatment for the traffic numbers.

ATE supports the implementation of a 20mph speed limit and a 15mph design speed. All paths should be made of a sealed surface and be at least 2m wide. ATE reserves the right to reconsider this position at reserved matters.

On-site facilities
Use of the Barnsley SPD parking guidance of 1 space per dwelling is considered acceptable, if unambitious by ATE, however it is encouraged to go beyond these minimums to provide 1 space per bedroom where possible as outlined in LTN 1/20 11.3. These should be part of the house curtilage or garage, providing direct access to the street. ATE does not consider sheds or gardens as acceptable cycle parking (even if secured) as these introduce friction to cycling and invite theft. Sheds are also inappropriate for cycle storage as they compete for space with barbeques, gardening tools and additional storage. The applicant mentions the development is to consist of 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes. When designing homes for families, especially larger homes, enough cycle parking should be provided for all members of the family to store their own bike.

Next steps
ATE requests this advice be shared with the LPA case officer, agent and applicant. ATE would be happy to discuss this in more detail if required, and review this decision if changes are made.