Outlook

LPA Reference: 144791/FO/2025 Detailed Response

From Active Travel England Planning [redacted]
Date Thu 03/09/2026 11:22
To Jennifer Atkinson [redacted]

1 attachment (271 KB)
Planning Response Full - Deferral - Pendulum Hotel - Manchester - 030926.pdf;

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LPA Reference: 144791/FO/2025

ATE Reference: ATE/26/00092/FULL

Site Address: PENDULUM HOTEL, WESTON BUILDING, SACKVILLE STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 3BB

Proposal: Phased development comprising: (a) Partial removal of existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 50 storeys and one of 17 storeys with an 8-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, highways works, and change of use of the Pendulum Hotel to purpose-built student accommodation; and (b) Removal of remaining existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 33 storeys and one of part-24 and part-8 storeys with a 1-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, and highways works.

ATE Case Officer: [redacted]

ATE Case Officer Email: [redacted]

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:

- Detailed Recommendations

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

Spatial Planning Team

Active Travel England

West Offices Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA

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Active Travel England
West Offices
Station Rise
York
YO1 6GA
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Your Ref: 144791/FO/2025
Our Ref: ATE/26/00092/FULL
Date: 03/09/2026

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

From: Spatial Planning Service, Active Travel England

To: *Jennifer Atkinson - Manchester City Council*

Application Ref: ***144791/FO/2025***
Site Address: ***PENDULUM HOTEL, WESTON BUILDING, SACKVILLE STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 3BB***

Description of development:*Phased development comprising:*
(a) Partial removal of existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 50 storeys and one of 17 storeys with an 8-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, highways works, and change of use of the Pendulum Hotel to purpose-built student accommodation; and
(b) Removal of remaining existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 33 storeys and one of part-24 and part-8 storeys with a 1-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, and highways works.

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.

1.0 Background and Summary

Active Travel England (ATE) has been reconsulted in relation to planning application **144791/FO/2025** for the phased redevelopment of Weston Student Halls and the Pendulum Hotel, 78 Sackville Street, Manchester. The development would provide 2,511 purpose-built student accommodation bedspaces across two phases, together with associated amenity space, landscaping and highway works. The May 2026 Design and Access Statement confirms that Phase A would deliver 1,296 new bedspaces alongside retained accommodation, followed by a further 1,215 bedspaces through Phase B.

ATE continues to recognise that the site occupies an inherently sustainable location. The revised DAS identifies Manchester Piccadilly Station within approximately 400m, a number of bus stops in close proximity, Manchester Coach Station within approximately 400m, and Manchester Oxford Road and other city centre destinations within walking distance. NCN

Route 6 is accessible to the west via Charles Street, while NCN Route 66 is accessible to the east, providing wider connections across Greater Manchester. The development is also proposed to remain car-free, with no resident car parking.

The updated DAS provides stronger evidence regarding the quality of the proposed internal environment. The streetscape is intended to strengthen Charles Street and Sackville Street as the public interface of the development, with the courtyard providing a landscaped environment for residents and the Woodland Edge creating the potential for future integration with the wider Sister ID public realm. Active frontage has also been maximised along Charles Street and Sackville Street, with back-of-house functions reduced along these elevations and internal amenity uses providing passive surveillance.

These are positive features. However, the reconsultation does not materially alter the transport evidence underpinning the application. In particular, no revised Framework Travel Plan or trip-generation assessment has been submitted that resolves ATE's concerns regarding active travel forecasting, mode-share ambition and the long-term monitoring of travel behaviour. There is also now conflicting information within the submitted documents regarding cycle parking provision.

RAG Rating: Amber/Red

ATE Recommendation: The revised design information is welcomed and strengthens the evidence relating to internal accessibility and placemaking. However, it does not resolve the principal outstanding transport matters. These should be addressed before ATE can support the application.

2.0 Trip Generation and Travel Plan

The original Transport Statement includes a dedicated trip-forecasting assessment, and the Framework Travel Plan establishes an intention to minimise single-occupancy car journeys, promote alternatives to the private car, promote active travel and provide residents with sustainable travel information. The car-free nature of the development provides a strong starting point for achieving a sustainable modal split.

Nevertheless, the present reconsultation does not provide updated transport evidence or an amended Framework Travel Plan. There is consequently no new information demonstrating a quantified forecast of **all-day walking, wheeling and cycling movements** associated with the 2,511-bed development, nor evidence presented through the reconsultation demonstrating how forecast demand has informed the amount of supporting infrastructure proposed.

Similarly, the updated material does not introduce stronger walking, wheeling and cycling mode-share targets or a revised package of monitoring and remedial measures. The Framework Travel Plan includes provisions for a Travel Plan Coordinator, travel information, walking and cycling initiatives, travel surveys, monitoring and review, but the reconsultation provides no further evidence tying these measures to ambitious, measurable mode-share outcomes.

ATE therefore considers that the principle of the Travel Plan remains appropriate, particularly given the site's car-free nature, but the reconsultation has not addressed the concern that active travel outcomes need to be measurable and capable of being managed over the lifetime of the development.

RAG Rating: Amber

ATE Recommendation: A final Travel Plan should establish clear baseline travel behaviour and specific, measurable and time-bound targets for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. Monitoring intervals, responsibility for implementation, trigger points and a defined package of remedial measures should be secured so that action is required where agreed targets are not achieved. The relationship between forecast active travel demand and the proposed infrastructure should also be demonstrated.

3.0 Active Travel Routes and Off-Site Infrastructure

The site's wider accessibility remains one of the strongest aspects of the application. The May 2026 DAS confirms that pedestrian connections from Charles Street and Sackville Street provide access towards Manchester Piccadilly, the Northern Quarter, Piccadilly Gardens, Oxford Road and nearby university campuses. Manchester Piccadilly lies within approximately 400m, while bus stops are available close to the site.

Cycling accessibility is also strong in strategic terms. NCN Route 6 passes close to the western side of the site and is accessible from Charles Street, providing connections towards Salford, Bury, Sale and Stockport. NCN Route 66 passes close to the eastern side and provides connections towards Failsworth and Rochdale via the canal corridor.

For the purposes of the ATE Toolkit, the development is therefore well located relative to public transport, higher education, employment, shops and city centre amenities. Given the PBSA use, proximity to university campuses and city centre destinations is particularly relevant. The site's location is considered capable of supporting a very high proportion of journeys by walking and public transport.

There is some additional information regarding potential public realm improvement. The May 2026 DAS identifies Charles Street as an active travel-focused arrival street and proposes new trees around the principal entrance and defensible planting along the building frontage. However, the document describes wider Charles Street improvements as a future aspiration requiring collaboration with third parties, rather than as a fully defined and secured part of the current scheme. Similarly, the Woodland Edge offers a future opportunity to connect into the wider ID Manchester development rather than a confirmed through-route delivered by this application.

ATE therefore considers the site's existing accessibility to be very good, but the distinction between infrastructure delivered by this development and longer-term aspirations associated with surrounding regeneration should remain clear.

RAG Rating: Green/Amber

ATE Recommendation: ATE welcomes the site's excellent accessibility. Prior to determination, the applicant should clearly identify the active travel and public realm improvements that form part of this application, distinguishing these from future third-party aspirations. Any agreed works to Charles Street and Sackville Street should be secured through the appropriate planning mechanism and should maintain convenient, inclusive and legible pedestrian and cycle movement.

4.0 Site Permeability and Placemaking

The revised DAS provides considerably stronger information on internal movement and inclusive design. The landscape strategy states that the courtyard and Woodland Edge will prioritise pedestrian movement and provide a combination of stepped and accessible routes to address the considerable level difference across the site.

The inclusive design strategy confirms that building entrances can be reached by flat or gently graded routes at gradients of 1:21 or shallower. Smooth, non-slip surfaces are proposed, stepped and graded routes provide user choice, and wayfinding is incorporated throughout the scheme. These measures respond positively to the approximately 2–2.5m level difference that has been identified as an existing site constraint.

The May 2026 access diagram also clarifies the hierarchy of pedestrian routes, cycle-store entrances and future pedestrian connections. The provision of a car-free internal environment, landscaped courtyard and predominantly active Charles Street and Sackville Street frontages should create a pedestrian-focused setting. The proposal to locate the principal entrance on Charles Street, where it would be overlooked and well lit, is also supported. Cycle-store entrances would be accessed from the courtyard and would similarly be controlled, overlooked and illuminated.

There is, however, an important distinction between **resident permeability** and wider public permeability. The courtyard is principally a controlled/private environment, while some of the southern connections illustrated by the scheme remain future routes dependent upon surrounding development. This does not undermine the quality of internal pedestrian circulation, but the application should not rely on future connections as though they were secured by the current proposal.

RAG Rating: Green/Amber

ATE Recommendation: The revised internal accessibility strategy is broadly supported. Final landscape and access details should secure the accessible gradients, clear widths, surfacing, lighting and wayfinding illustrated in the DAS. Future connections should be safeguarded where practicable, but only routes secured through this application should be relied upon in demonstrating compliance.

5.0 Cycle Parking

The original Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan identify **144 cycle spaces**, comprising 80 double-stacked covered spaces in Phase A, 60 double-stacked covered spaces in Phase B and four visitor spaces. The May 2026 DAS similarly identifies **144 bicycle spaces** in the development brief.

However, the revised DAS is internally inconsistent. The Phase A landscape strategy refers to **84 cycle spaces** being retained and expanded when Phase B comes forward. More significantly, the boundary treatment plan on page 117 states **"Cycle Storage Total x 164"**. It is therefore currently unclear whether the application proposes 144 or 164 spaces and how the provision is distributed between phases.

The revised DAS does provide useful qualitative information. Cycle storage is incorporated into the courtyard landscape, including green-roof cycle storage, while the cycle-store entrances would be controlled, well lit and overlooked. These principles are supported.

Nevertheless, for a development containing **2,511 student bedspaces**, the submitted evidence needs to demonstrate that the proposed quantum has been derived from an appropriate standard and is sufficient to accommodate anticipated demand. The application also does not clearly demonstrate provision for adapted, cargo or other non-standard cycles. Reliance predominantly on double-stacked systems also requires careful consideration of accessibility and usability in accordance with the principles of LTN 1/20.

This is not simply a detailed design matter. The final required quantum could have implications for the amount of space necessary within the development and should therefore be resolved before determination rather than leaving the fundamental level of provision entirely to condition.

RAG Rating: Red

ATE Recommendation: The applicant should provide a definitive cycle parking schedule confirming the total provision for each phase and reconcile the conflicting figures of 144 and 164 spaces. The schedule should demonstrate how the quantum has been derived and how it will meet anticipated resident, staff and visitor demand. Detailed layouts should demonstrate convenient access, secure and accessible parking, and appropriate provision for non-standard and adapted cycles. A proportion of the spaces should be capable of accommodating such cycles without reliance on lifting or double-stacking.

6.0 Conclusion

ATE recognises that the proposal benefits from an **exceptionally accessible city-centre location** and has a number of strong active travel characteristics. The development would be car-free; Manchester Piccadilly and multiple bus services are readily accessible; NCN Routes 6 and 66 are close to the site; the revised design maximises active frontage along Charles Street and Sackville Street; and the internal landscape provides attractive, step-free pedestrian routes alongside alternative stepped connections.

The May 2026 DAS has improved the evidence available in respect of placemaking, inclusive movement, active frontages and the operation of the landscaped courtyard. These aspects of the reconsultation are welcomed.

However, the formal reconsultation does not provide a revised Transport Statement or Framework Travel Plan and therefore does not materially address the outstanding concerns regarding the forecasting of walking, wheeling and cycling trips, measurable mode-share targets, monitoring and remedial measures. More importantly, the revised DAS introduces an unresolved discrepancy in cycle parking provision, with different parts of the submission referring to 144, 84 and 164 spaces. For a development of 2,511 student bedrooms, ATE considers that the final quantum and quality of cycle parking needs to be clearly demonstrated before the application is determined.

Overall ATE RAG Rating: Red

ATE Recommendation: Deferral

ATE recommends that determination is deferred pending clarification of the definitive cycle parking quantum and its compliance with the anticipated needs of the development, together with confirmation of accessible/non-standard cycle provision. A strengthened Travel Plan should also establish measurable active travel targets, monitoring arrangements and remedial measures. Subject to satisfactory resolution of these matters, the scheme's car-free nature, highly sustainable location and improved pedestrian-focused public realm provide a strong basis for ATE to move towards a more supportive position.