

Awbridge Parish Council  
Awbridge  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 0HG

Universal Services  
The Castle  
Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO23 8UD

**Reference:** Awbridge\_NP\_R16

**Enquiries to:** Spatial Planning

**Date:** 21/05/2026

**Email:** [planningconsultations@hants.gov.uk](mailto:planningconsultations@hants.gov.uk)

Dear Sir,

Thank you for consulting Hampshire County Council on the Awbridge Neighbourhood plan as part of the Regulation 16 consultation. The County Council is responding as the Local Highway Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, Waste Management Authority and Public Health Authority for Hampshire.

Hampshire County Council is required to ensure that the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire](#) (2025) is embedded within all levels of plan-making as part of its role as a Responsible Authority, and comments are provided below.

For inclusivity, all references to walking and cycling in the Neighbourhood Plan should also include the term 'wheeling'. Wheeling is an equivalent alternative to foot/pedestrian-based mobility and includes wheeled mobilities such as manual self- or assistant-propelled wheelchairs, including wheelchairs with power attachments or all-terrain attachments (such as the "Freewheel"), powered wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and non-motorised scooters (e.g. those commonly used by children for school travel).

The County Council adopted the [Hampshire Local Transport Plan \(LTP4\)](#) in February 2024, and the policies contained within it. LTP4 is the strategic transport plan for the County, and its policies will have notable influence on the successful delivery of some of the policies and outcomes contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.

A Movement and Place framework is currently being prepared by the County Council to help implement the policies in LTP4. The framework will be used by the

County Council to influence decisions on street design, and about the types of interventions required to improve accessibility. The framework will be guided by evidence of how streets in different locations function, and how they could be improved for different users. For example, some streets are designed in a way that prioritises walking and socialising, whereas others are designed to give priority to vehicles. This framework will hopefully support implementation of the policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan that seek to create improved streets and places.

The County Council as Highway Authority will provide comments as appropriate on sites which reach the planning application stage. In terms of the Design Code, please note that Hampshire County Council is only able to support highway infrastructure schemes that are designed in accordance with its guidance, available here: [www.hants.gov.uk/transport/developers/technical-guidance](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/developers/technical-guidance).

<b><u>Policy and chapters in NP</u></b>	<b><u>Hampshire County Council comments</u></b>
<b><u>Vision and objectives (p. 7)</u></b>	
Transport policy	<p>Currently, the Awbridge Vision does not reference sustainable transport. The Plan could better align with Chapter 8 of the <a href="#">NPPF (2024)</a>, particularly paragraph 109, by incorporating a vision-led approach to transport.</p> <p>A key part of Policy A11 is improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists moving through the village. Incorporating this within the Vision, and clearly setting out how it supports sustainable travel, would help ensure that transport mitigation aligns with the objectives of the NPPF and LTP4. This includes prioritising people and providing residents with high-quality, accessible travel options. In turn, this would support the delivery of objectives 9, 13, 14, and 15 of the neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Hampshire County Council can provide guidance to the Parish Council on producing and implementing a vision-led approach to transport.</p>
<b><u>A3 – Local Green Spaces</u></b>	
Local Highway Authority	<p>The County Council has reviewed paragraph 108 of the NPPF (2024) which states: “Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework” .</p> <p>The County Council therefore has concerns around the designation of highway verges as Local Green Space. These areas form part of the wider extent of adopted highway land, and as such, must remain available for use in connection with the operation of the Local Highway Authority. By defining them as Local Green Space, and placing additional constraints on them, it risks restricting the Local Highway Authority’s ability to deliver</p>

	<p>improvements and upgrades to the highway in Awbridge in the future.</p> <p>The County Council requests the removal of all highway land from Local Green Space designations. Our records show this relates to the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGS4: Barley Hill/Saunders Lane North</li> <li>• LGS6: Large grass verge on the bend of Romsey Road.</li> <li>• LGS7.1: Grass verge at the north of the Romsey Road.</li> <li>• LGS7.2: Grass verge to the east of Stanbridge Lane at the junction with Romsey Road.</li> </ul> <p>Regarding LGS2: Saunders Lane, parts of this proposed designated area fall within adopted highways land; highway areas should be removed and the size of this designation reduced accordingly.</p>
Public Health	<p>Notwithstanding the above, the County Council has additional comments on the policy A3.</p> <p>The <a href="#">NPPF</a> (2024), in paragraph 105 outlines the importance of linking open spaces for achieving socially sustainable development by providing better facilities for users that support community health and well-being. Public Health England set this out further in <a href="#">Improving Access to Greenspace review</a> (2020).</p> <p>Suggested policy wording:</p> <p>“The Local Green Spaces are shown on the ‘Map of Local Green Spaces’ (Figure 14) and listed below. These spaces will be protected, <b><u>and development proposals will be expected to explore and deliver opportunities to link them through new and enhanced footpaths</u></b>, for the benefit of the community. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”</p>
<b>A4.1 – Biodiversity and Habitats</b>	
Responsible Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<p>Under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021, public authorities must to take into account the <a href="#">Local Nature Recovery Strategy</a> (LNRS) for Hampshire (2025), and this includes the preparation of neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The LNRS identifies shared priorities for nature recovery and the potential activities that different sectors can do to achieve those priorities. It also supports the delivery of ‘nature-based solutions’ for flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, climate change resilience, improvements in water quality, and public health and wellbeing.</p>

Policies should reflect the priorities set out in the LNRS for Hampshire to ensure local development contributes to achieving nature recovery targets. The following suggestions would further align draft policy A4.1 with the LNRS:

Where the LNRS [Local Habitat Map](#) is mentioned in the suggested policy wording below, this includes three strategic layers:

- Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs);
- Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance (ACBs); and
- Measures which identify specific, actionable locations to enhance or create habitats for nature recovery.

Having reviewed the Local Habitat Map, it is evident there are APIBs, ACBs and measures identified within the Parish that would benefit from targeted nature recovery, which would contribute positively to the goals and objectives for the LNRS. Further information on the LNRS and Local habitat map can be found on the LNRS for Hampshire webpages.

Suggested wording:

'6.4.6 the policy objectives are:

- to ~~protect and~~ enhance **identified specific, actionable locations and create habitats that enable nature recovery and increase** the biodiversity value of the River Test and other habitats within the parish;'

Suggested policy wording:

'Development proposals that seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area aligned with **the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire and complying with** all other relevant Development Plan policies, will be supported'.

'iv Preserving and enhancing the individual types of local priority habitats as **identified in the Hampshire Local Habitat Map and** shown on Figure 17;'

Suggested additional policy wording:

**vii. Where off-site Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is required for development proposals, the BNG project should be located within areas identified in the LNRS to maximise habitat connectivity and ecological network resilience.**

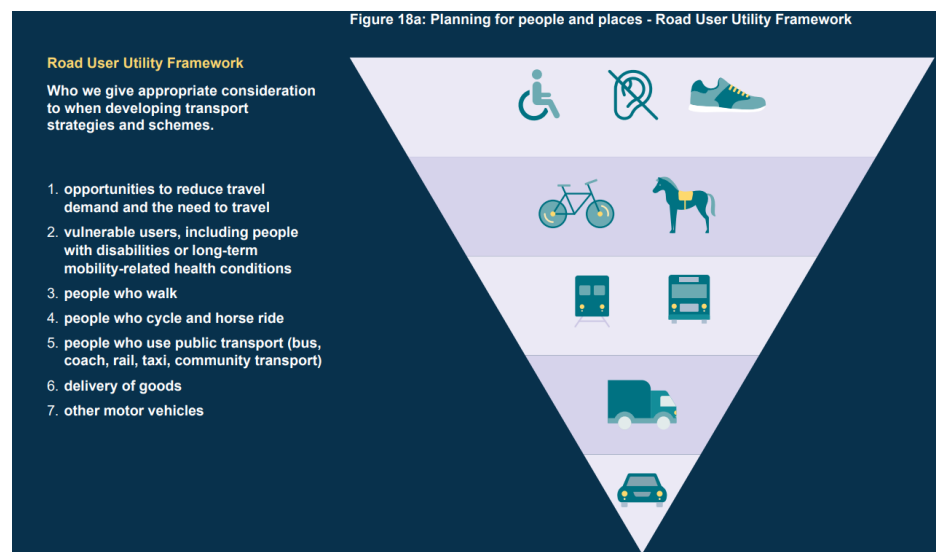
<b><u>A9 - Design</u></b>	
Waste Management	<p>The County Council is supportive of design codes AW28 and AW30 which promote reducing the use of virgin materials, and the reuse of construction materials in new developments.</p> <p>Policy A9 can include a new policy criteria that prioritises the use of recycled materials as part of new developments, and in doing so promoting a circular economy. This would align the policy with the <a href="#">draft Test Valley Local Plan (2024)</a> policy CL1: countering climate change and the <a href="#">National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)</a> that sets out the Waste Hierarchy that emphasises reuse and recycling.</p> <p>Suggested additional policy criteria:</p> <p><b>“x. Prioritise the sustainable reuse of recycled materials to minimise waste disposal”.</b></p>
Public Health	<p>The Public Health Authority endorses the <a href="#">Building for a Healthy Life</a> design tool for neighbourhoods, streets homes and public spaces. An additional policy criterion that encourages applicants to use the tool to ensure proposed developments support active lifestyles, social interaction and a strong sense of place will align the policy with paragraph 138 of the <a href="#">NPPF (2024)</a>.</p> <p>Suggested additional policy criteria:</p> <p>“xi. Applicants of proposed development are encouraged to use the Building for a Healthy Life design tool, alongside the Awbridge Character Appraisal and Design Code, to guide the quality of proposed developments in order to promote active lifestyles, social interaction and a strong sense of place.”</p>
<b><u>A10 – Flooding and Drainage</u></b>	
Flood and Water Management	<p>The County Council supports the requirement for drainage strategies to accompany development proposals (criterion iii).</p> <p>The County Council will only review drainage strategies submitted for major developments. In implementing Policy A10, it should be noted that drainage strategies for minor developments will be assessed by Test Valley Borough Council and not the Lead Local Flood Authority.</p>
<b><u>A11 – Accessibility, Public Rights of Way and Highway Safety</u></b>	
Transport Policy	<p>Figure 39, ‘Accidents and Areas of Concern’, indicates locations of significant safety concern and areas where there have been incidents resulting in slight and serious injuries. This figure does not make it clear which source of information was used, and whether it is the County Council’s road casualty data (see</p>

[www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadsafety](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadsafety)). The source and date of the data used should be referenced in the figure or supporting text.

[Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act](#) places a statutory duty on the Local Highway Authority to manage safety on local roads, as well as implementing measures to improve road safety, reduce the risk of road traffic collisions, and prevent casualties among all road users.

Regarding the ‘opportunities’ shown on Figure 39, the County Council has published transport plans, strategies and tools that will guide how highways improvements are planned, designed and delivered across Hampshire, which can be found on [Transport Planning](#) webpages. For example, the [North Test Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) (2025) outlines the local route running through Awbridge to Romsey, and provides applicants with clear framework to support walking and cycling aspirations in the Parish.

Policy A11 should explicitly reference how active travel is prioritised not just supported, in line with [NPPF](#) (2024) paragraph 109(e) that outlines how opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use should be identified and pursued. This would align with Hampshire’s [LPT4’s](#) (2024) guiding principles to reduce private-car dependency and put people and places first, by being consistent with the Road User Utility Framework (Policy C1):



Suggested wording changes:

“i. ~~Explore~~ **Prioritise and provide** safer cycling and pedestrian routes linking the parish to the wider area”.

	<p>“ii. Ensure new development along Danes Road includes adequate parking provision which does not exacerbate existing problems in the vicinity of the primary school <b><u>prioritises safe, comfortable and direct access for walking, wheeling and cycling to the primary school and nearby facilities, supported by proportionate on-site parking management that does not undermine the quality of the street as a place</u></b>”.</p> <p>Criteria 3 should be reworded to focus the policy on improvements to active travel rather than the existing parking problems.</p> <p>Suggested wording:  “(iii) ‘Support improvements to improve school parking problems where relevant <b><u>Contribute to a package of measures to address school access and safety, prioritising active travel and reducing conflict between vehicles and vulnerable users</u></b>’.</p> <p>Wording can also be added to this policy to ensure that new infrastructure is appropriate to the rural area, and also accessible for all users, whilst considering the rural setting. These standards should be in line with Hampshire <a href="#">Technical Guidance Note 10</a> “Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities” (2026), and Department for Transport’s <a href="#">Inclusive Mobility guide</a> (2021).</p> <p>Suggested wording:  “Any provisions for new footways or paths must be appropriate to a rural area <b><u>and meet inclusive mobility requirements and standards provided by the Local Highway Authority</u></b>”.</p>
<b><u>Design Code</u></b>	
Transport Policy	<p>Code AW21 should reference Hampshire’s <a href="#">LTP4</a> (2024) to be in alignment with local policy and to require development to be designed in a way that prioritises sustainable travel choices and a people-first approach, as well as considering the safety and needs of all road users.</p> <p>Suggested additional wording:  “Developers must, as proportionate to the scheme proposed, provide a route hierarchy which maximises opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists-, <b><u>as outlined in the Road User Utility Framework from Policy C3 of the Hampshire’s LTP4</u></b>”.</p>
Transport Policy	<p>Code AW22 states: ‘Shared cycle and footpaths are preferred rather than individual footpaths. Such paths should be 3 metres in width’.</p>

	<p>Shared use infrastructure can cause conflicts between pedestrians (including disabled users) and cyclists, as the available space for those users is reduced. In line with <a href="#">Local Transport Note 1/20</a> 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' (2020) from the Department for Transport, priority should instead be given to reducing traffic speeds or reallocating space from motorised traffic wherever possible, with particular consideration for vulnerable users. This is supported by Hampshire's <a href="#">LTP4</a> (2024), and the Road User Utility Framework (p. 59), which prioritises pedestrian and cyclists over motorised vehicles.</p> <p>Due to the rural setting of Awbridge, shared use paths could be an acceptable solution, providing they are a minimum of 3 metres in width (not a fixed or maximum standard, with adequate separation) to ensure the safety of all users.</p> <p>Suggested wording changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Where</u></b> shared cycle and footpaths are <del>preferred</del> <b><u>required, and after having considered and ruled out segregated options on deliverability grounds,</u></b> rather than individual footpaths, such paths should be <b><u>a minimum of</u></b> 3 metres in width;</li></ul>
--	--

We trust that the comments are of assistance. If you wish to discuss any of the comments raised, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Emily Howbrook  
Strategic Planning Manager  
Universal Services