

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Updated December 2022)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	Love Our High Streets: The Island Market Square Project, Midsomer Norton
Name of directorate and service	Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Housing
Name and role of officers completing the EIA	David Gosset
Date of assessment	Updated February 2024

Equality Impact Assessment (or ‘Equality Analysis’) is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so leave blank any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council’s website.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom ● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations ● Intended outcomes 	<p>The High Street Renewal Team are working with appointed professionals and the Highways and Traffic Group (Traffic Management Team) and Parking Services Team to deliver a redevelopment scheme for The Island in Midsomer Norton. This scheme has been designed in partnership with local community residents and businesses, community groups, Historic England and relevant B&NES departments as part of the High Street Renewal Programme for Midsomer Norton and the WECA Love Our High Streets initiative, for which a grant of £1,045,000 has been secured.</p> <p>The Market Square proposals seek to redevelop The Island area within Midsomer Norton to create a flexible and attractive public space suitable for community use which will enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the High Street and surrounding areas. At present this hard-surfaced area is primarily used for car parking and not fit-for-purpose due to its poor condition, irregular layout and the dominance of car parking. Footways are narrow and uneven.</p> <p>The stated aims of the proposals are to:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver public realm improvement works and create a new multi-use open space for community events, civic occasions and cultural activities such as markets; 2. To provide a welcoming, safe and attractive public space, with high-quality surface materials, street furniture and events infrastructure, to support/enhance the leisure, business and cultural offer of the Market Square/Island; 3. To support the local economy by boosting footfall to the High Street and providing outdoor community space and associated opportunities for a diverse mix of businesses to thrive; 4. To provide improvements to the 'at risk' Conservation Area and enhancements to the setting of heritage assets including the Grade II listed Town Hall, White Hart pub, Jersey Dairy Stores and nearby locally-listed buildings; 5. To support the transformation of the Midsomer Norton Town Hall as it moves into community ownership, including the reinstatement of the internal ground-floor Market Hall, by providing high-quality civic space directly adjacent <p>As such, the proposals firmly support the strategic aims of the Council and the ambitions outlined for Midsomer Norton town centre as detailed in the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan (Policy SV1 and SV2), Midsomer Norton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan 2018, B&NES Public Realm and Movement Strategy and emerging Local Plan 2016-2036. Considerations of ecological and climate emergencies will also be made when sourcing products and specifying planting and materials and there is an increased emphasis on greening and supporting active travel.</p>
1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:	This is both a High Street regeneration project and local highway improvement project. Various alternative options have been considered

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? ● Is it a national requirement?). ● How much room for review is there? 	<p>however the proposals aim to bring maximum benefits and animation within Midsomer Norton to support footfall and economic vibrancy whilst improving the useability, accessibility and safety of The Island and enhancing the local facilities of the wider High Street.</p> <p>This scheme forms part of a package of interventions within the wider High Street Renewal Programme for Midsomer Norton and, following extensive community engagement and feasibility work, the location is considered the most suitable location for this type of investment.</p> <p>These interventions will need to address equalities impacts and support sustainable development including modal shifts towards walking and cycling. Equalities impacts and considerations have informed the scheme proposals and ongoing accessibility assessment will contribute to the technical design stage.</p>
<p>1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?</p>	<p>As detailed above, the aims of the project also correspond with other policies and priorities of the Council including the ambitions outlined for Midsomer Norton town centre in the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan (Policy SV1 and SV2), Midsomer Norton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan 2018, B&NES Public Realm and Movement Strategy and emerging Local Plan 2016-2036.</p> <p>Considerations of ecological and climate emergencies will also be made when sourcing products and specifying planting and materials, and there is an increased emphasis on greening and supporting active travel. The transport policies of the Council generally seek to encourage greater use of public transport and walking and cycling for those who are able – the scheme will support these objectives through direct and indirect improvements to public transport and highways infrastructure (e.g. relocated bus stop, new bus shelter and cycle parking).</p>

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
<p>2.1 What equalities training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>	<p>B&NES employees within the team will have had at least Equalities training as part of our induction and ongoing mandatory training. In addition the Project Manager has undertaken a workshop on Health Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the equalities profile of service users?</p>	<p>Information about the equalities profile of people in Bath & North East Somerset can be found at https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000022/</p> <p>The area encompassed by the scheme is a public area (retail high street) in Midsomer Norton town centre. Previous surveys have established that this area is well used by pedestrians each day. No demographic breakdown has been carried out specifically, however it is accessed by a wide variety of people, including local residents, shoppers, businesses, and school students. Further data collection is now in place and being collated quarterly.</p>
<p>2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>The scheme design has been informed by datasets which have helped the team understand how Temple Street is currently used. This included a public consultation report which were made permanent in December 2021. Further data collection, research and business surveys were carried out which led to the Updates and Next Steps document being published in July 2022, reflecting how the consultation had impacted upon design decisions.</p>
<p>2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>Data regarding service users has been gathered through feasibility, pilot work and consultation with project stakeholders, community groups, local residents and nearby businesses. Site surveys, observations by scheme designers, focus groups and best practice guidance have enabled the Design Team to gain a well-rounded understanding of how The Island currently</p>

	<p>functions, service users and community needs, all of which have been factored into the proposed design.</p> <p>The scheme is passing through the Highways Technical Approval process where a number of relevant matters are considered such as accessibility for visually impaired users, provision of blue badge spaces, kerb heights and general accessibility. In addition, the scheme is currently consulting on a Traffic Regulation Order and this process formally gives people the opportunity to comment on the realignment and new pedestrian areas from which any necessary changes can be made.</p> <p>An accessible entrance to the Town Hall is required to meet Building Regulations and the provision set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p>
<p>2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?</p>	<p>N/A</p>

3. Assessment of impact: ‘Equality analysis’

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	Improvement of the amenity and accessibility of the area to create a safe and attractive public realm with an ease of movement throughout	The design of the scheme is subject to a Road Safety Audit and various other assessments to ensure its compliance with policies and legislation.
3.2 Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	One of the aims of the project is ensure the general public, regardless of their sex feels safe in the public realm and adjoining streets and the design work has focused on this element.	A review of the existing street lighting has been undertaken and the proposal has been subject of a LUX review to ensure street lighting levels are sufficient to ensure the space is well lit at night.
3.3 Pregnancy and maternity	Since some pregnant women may experience mobility difficulties and the aim of the scheme is to promote pedestrian activity in the area. This will improve the accessibility of the area and also reduce the car dominant environment that currently exists at The Island. This will help to reduce traffic and therefore improve air quality which can help reduce the impact of vehicle generated pollutants such as NO2 on the health of both maternity and unborn children.	The introducing of a level surface, high quality surface treatment and drop kerbs will improve the ease movement during pregnancy and using a push chair.
3.4 Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.	None identified

<p>3.5 Disability – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration both physical, sensory and mental impairments and mental health)</p>	<p>Accessibility for all road users has been considered throughout the design and implementation stages, in accordance with regulations and good practice.</p> <p>The scheme includes the provision of 2 dedicated blue badge spaces. New accessible seating areas are to be provided within the scheme. This can help provide a rest area for those with walking difficulties.</p> <p>The introducing of a level surface, high quality surface treatment and drop kerbs will improve the ease movement during for all and has been designed with disabilities in mind. The scheme includes flush kerbs for the majority of the pedestrian desire lines and where kerbing is required standardised height kerb have been used at 60mm to ensure those with visual impairments can more easily recognise the level change.</p> <p>The scheme includes the relocation of a main bus stop from The Island and agreement has been reached with the bus providers that buses will re-route services to the High Street Hollies bus stop. Improvements will be made to this bus stop with wider pavements and accessible bus kerbs to ensure level access for passengers.</p>	<p>The scheme proposals are considered to be a significant improvement on the existing situation and therefore no actual negative or adverse impacts for people with disabilities, or belonging to certain age groups, are anticipated.</p> <p>In the short-term the slight reduction in parking capacity will require people to adjust to the changes, however potential impacts are mitigated by the provision of best-practice compliant car parking spaces including two fully-accessible disabled parking bays.</p> <p>Uneven and narrow footways will be replaced by widened footways with fewer curbs, narrow parking bays are being replaced, delivery and loading arrangements are being made safe and additional street furniture will provide accessible seating for rest stops.</p> <p>The existing bus stop at The Island leave pedestrians needing to cross a wide bell-mouth adjacent to the busy B3355 making it difficult to navigate for those with physical, sensory or mental impairments. The removal of this bus stop and re-routing of buses to an improved High Street bus stop will create a centralised bus stop up to modern</p>
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	<p>Recognising that not all disability is mobility based, a general reduction in traffic does make the space both safer and more suitable for those with sensory difficulties such as vision impairment or hyper sensitivity based conditions.</p> <p>Reducing traffic in areas can improve air quality which can help reduce the impact of vehicle generated pollutants such as NO2 on the health of those with health conditions such as COPD, Asthma, heart conditions and other long</p>	<p>standards and specifications with wider pavements allowing for better access.</p> <p>An adjustment in behaviour will be required due to the relocation of the bus stop and this will be more difficult for those with sensory or mental impairments however the proposal better caters for all groups and so in the long term will deliver benefits.</p>
<p>3.6 Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups</p>	<p>The scheme includes the relocation of a main bus stop from The Island and agreement has been reached with the bus providers that buses will re-route services to the High Street Hollies bus stop. Improvements will be made to this bus stop with wider pavements and accessible bus kerbs to ensure level access for passengers. This will help to ensure the bus stop is useable by all age groups.</p> <p>The Town Hall bus stop is currently used by school age children and so the proposal to improve the Hollies bus stop will help to create a safe waiting area when busy.</p>	<p>With regards to any age-related mobility issues please see above 3.5.</p> <p>The removal of the bus stop within The Island will, in the short term, require adjustment to bus user habits and will therefore have the potential for perceived negative impacts on certain user groups. This is however mitigated by the positive steps of locating the main High Street bus stop centrally within the High Street and adjacent to the proposed Mobility Hub on the lower High Street.</p>

	The Hollies bus stop is located more centrally to the High Street so that the main shopping area is more accessible and it is within 35m of the disabled parking bay.	
3.7 Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.	None identified
3.8 Sexual orientation – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual people	The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.	None identified
3.9 Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.	None identified
3.10 Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.	None identified
3.11 Socio-economically disadvantaged* – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).	The nature of the project means that the facilities provided are equally accessible to all regardless of socio-economic background. Therefore, the project raises no equality issues or specific considerations relating to socially-economically disadvantaged people.	None identified

<p>3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities</p>	<p>The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
<p>3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).</p>	<p>The nature of the project means there is a neutral impact.</p>	<p>None identified</p>

*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay ‘due regard’ to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council & NHS B&NES Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Opportunity to link up with Equality Impact Assessment for Mobility Hub	Regeneration team liaison with Transport Strategy team	Complete review in Q4 FY23/24	DG	31 Mar 24

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be ‘approved’ by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council’s and/or NHS B&NES’ website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Cleo Newcombe-Jones, Regeneration Manager

Date: 29/02/2024