

## Colchester Borough Council

### Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

#### Section 1: screening stage

Name of policy, service or strategy to be assessed:

- Historic Town Centre Improvements.

1. What is the main purpose of the policy, service or strategy?

- To reduce unnecessary traffic from the town centre, allowing a better flow of buses, taxis and cyclists and to improve the environment for pedestrians.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Traffic

3. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected?

- Motorists and passengers using the Town Centre (High Street) as a cut-through between 10am and 6pm; those accessing the Dutch Quarter from the High Street.
- High Street retailers for whom deliveries will not be able to be carried out between 10am and 6pm
- Users of Public Transport
- Motorists and/ or passengers with a disability whose use of accessible parking will be affected
- Taxi drivers: The current taxi rank capacity on the High Street will be reduced during the day.

4. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy, service or strategy?

- Improved public transport access through the town centre.
- Improved health, enjoyment and access for pedestrians who shop and visit the town

- Improved health, enjoyment and accessibility for cyclists.

5. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- Essex County Council.

6. Does the policy, service or strategy help to further or facilitate to our 'general duty'<sup>1</sup> to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'<sup>2</sup> and those who do not?
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

- Yes.

If you have answered 'no', please give details of the reasons for this decision:

- Not applicable

7. If you answered 'yes' to any of the sections in Question 6 (above), please complete the following in order to identify how the policy, practice or strategy furthers the aim of the 'general duty':

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?

<sup>1</sup> these 3 points summarise the 'general duty' as it applies to public sector organisations in the Equality Act 2010

<sup>2</sup> The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Age	Older people (60+)	It is important that older people's needs are met, which will help to avoid any potential for discrimination. Without improvements to traffic flow, this group could find itself disadvantaged by slower and less punctual public transport, and a less safe environment.		
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)			
Disability	Physical	It is important that the needs of those with a disability are met, which will help to avoid any potential for discrimination. Without improvements to traffic flow, this group could find itself disadvantaged by slower and less punctual public transport, and a less safe environment.		
	Sensory			
	Learning			
	Mental health issues			
	Other – <i>please specify</i>			
Ethnicity <sup>3</sup>	White			

<sup>3</sup> Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British); African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British); White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed); British, Irish; Other White (White); Chinese, Other (Other ethnic group).

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
	Black			
	Chinese			
	Mixed Ethnic Origin			
	Gypsies/ Travellers			
	Other – <i>please state</i>			
Language	English not first language			
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	It is important that this group's needs are met and this will help to avoid any potential for discrimination. Without improvements to traffic flow, this group could find itself disadvantaged by slower and less punctual public transport, and a less safe environment.		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none) <sup>4</sup>			
Sex	Men			
	Women	Additional taxi rank capacity on the High Street at night will improve security for this group, which could help to reduce incidents of harassment.		

<sup>4</sup> For example, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or no religious belief.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
	Transsexual / gender reassignment	Additional taxi rank capacity on the High Street at night will improve security for this group, which could help to reduce incidents of harassment.		
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay and bisexual			
Marriage and Civil Partnership <sup>5</sup>	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership		not applicable	not applicable

8. Are there any concerns that the policy, service or strategy could have a differential impact in terms of equality?

- Yes

Please use the table below to indicate how the policy, service or strategy could have a positive or negative effect on any of the following equality groups (known under the Equality Act as 'protected characteristics'). Include reference to any consultation, data or information that you have used in making this assessment about positive or negative effects.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group

<sup>5</sup> Our legal duty in respect of 'marriage or civil partnership' extends only to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	X	Current volumes of High Street traffic make road crossing hazardous. Older people will particularly benefit from improved traffic flow and reduced traffic flows as they are more likely to be pedestrians and users of public transport.	X	Concerns have been identified arising from the results of consultation over the closure of the bus station without an immediate replacement facility. Older people could be impacted negatively because they are more likely to use these services. See section 10 (below) for details on how this identified negative impact (as with those below) has been reduced/ removed.
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	<p>A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups. Younger people will particularly benefit from improved traffic flow and reduced traffic flows as they are more likely to be cyclists, pedestrians and users of public transport.</p> <p>Younger people are more likely to benefit from additional capacity to be provided for the taxi rank outside Marks and Spencer on the High Street at night and the larger more visible rank in Head Street. This is because they are more likely to use taxi services at this time.</p> <p>Improved air quality associated with reduced traffic flow will benefit children.</p>	X	<p>Concerns have been identified arising from the results of consultation over the closure of the bus station without an immediate replacement facility. Younger people could be impacted negatively because they are more likely to use these services.</p> <p>Concerns have been identified from the results of consultation over restricted access to St Thomas Moore's primary school. This could impact negatively on children.</p>

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
Disability	Physical	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups including those with a disability.	X	Blue Badge holders will not be able to use the approximately 26 (equivalent) car parking spaces on the High Street between 10am and 6pm.
	Sensory	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups including those with a disability.  Current volumes of High Street traffic make road crossing hazardous which is particularly significant for this group.	X	Blue Badge holders will not be able to use the approximately 26 (equivalent) car parking spaces on the High Street between 10am and 6pm.
	Learning	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups including those with a disability.	X	Blue Badge holders will not be able to use the approximately 26 (equivalent) car parking spaces on the High Street between 10am and 6pm.
	Mental health issues	X	As above	X	Blue Badge holders will not be able to use the approximately 26 (equivalent) car parking spaces on the High Street between 10am and 6pm.
	<i>Other – please specify</i>				
Ethnicity	White	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups.		
	Black	X	As above		
	Chinese	X	As above		
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	X	As above		

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
	Gypsies/ Travellers	X	As above		
	<i>Other – please state</i>				
Language	English not first language				
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	X	<p>Current volumes of High Street traffic make road crossing hazardous and a safer “less traffic” environment will particularly benefit this group.</p> <p>This group will benefit particularly from improved public transport flow.</p> <p>Improved air quality associated with reduced traffic flow will particularly benefit this group for health reasons.</p>		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	X	A safer “less traffic” environment will benefit all groups.		
Sex	Men	X	A safer “less traffic” environment will benefit all groups.		
	Women	X	<p>A safer “less traffic” environment will benefit all groups.</p> <p>Women are likely to benefit from additional capacity to be provided for the taxi rank outside Marks and Spencer on the High Street at night and the larger more visible rank in Head Street. These services help to ensure women’s safety.</p>		
	Transsexual / gender reassignment	X	A safer “less traffic” environment will benefit all groups.		



'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay and bisexual	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups.		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership	X	A safer "less traffic" environment will benefit all groups.		

9. Could the policy, service or strategy discriminate<sup>6</sup> against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly?

- No

10. If you have identified any negative impacts above, have you been able to minimise or remove them, and if so, how?

Initial discussion on town centre traffic flows were discussed at a Stakeholder meeting in March 2010 and this was followed by a series of public events in the town centre using the mobile unit, website and information available at libraries, Town Centre Steering group launched. Between October and December 2010 consultation on the proposals have taken place with the general public, councillors, businesses and organisations representing a number of the 'protected characteristics'. This has specifically included a stakeholder event which launched a further week long exhibition. Council officers were available to talk the project through and answer any questions. The exhibition was held at the retail unit in 9 Red Lion Yard and over 530 people visited the exhibition over the course of the week. Information on the project was posted on the Better Town Centre website and an online questionnaire was launched. 193 questionnaires were received along with 90 additional email comments and questions. A majority of those who responded to the questionnaire perceived that the changes would have a positive impact on pedestrians (55.4%), on pollution (53.9%), on traffic congestion (42.6%), on bus users (53.2%) and on cyclists (53.7%). A majority perceived that the changes would have a negative impact on businesses (46.8%). However, there is no evidence that businesses themselves hold this view, and consultation is continuing with businesses, particularly over concerns raised in regard to delivery services.

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<sup>6</sup> Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or Marriage and Civil Partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic' unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim.

The Council has specifically engaged with the Fair Access 2 Colchester Group, , CORBA, the Hackney Carriage Association and the Bus Operators on an ongoing basis. Others consulted include; the Federation of Small Businesses, Age Concern, Mobilise Shopping Centre operators and individual business operators.

From the emails, and comments made within the allotted space on the questionnaire, it is possible to identify key concerns some of which could have a differential impact on equality.

1. 12.4% of respondents identified concerns over the closure of the bus station without an immediate replacement facility.

This could impact negatively on 'older people' and 'younger people' as they are more likely to use public transport (see section 8.) Options are being pursued to lessen the impact:

- The County Council, with support from the Borough Council aims to bid for European funding that will provide high quality information technology for future facilities to include improvements to existing bus stops and shelters. This reflects respondents' request for better and more easily accessible information.
- The use of Osborne Street / Stanwell Street is being considered as a 'lay-over' for buses and passenger hub.
- The Council will continue to work with developers to bring about a Vineyard Gate facility from 2015

2. 7.8% of respondents identified concerns over reduced access to Priory Street and to St Thomas Moore's primary school.

Options are being pursued to lessen the impact:

- The Council is considering reversing the traffic flow on Priory Street from East Hill; some testing of this option has taken place.

3. 9.5% of respondents identified concerns over disabled parking. Some respondents feel that there was a lack of an adequate alternative to parking on the High Street. This potential negative impact has been identified further above: *'Blue Badge holders will not be able to use the approximately 26 (equivalent) car parking spaces on the High Street between 10am and 6pm'*

To address this impact, additional parking will be made available for Blue Badge holders at various node points around the town centre, including:

- Vineyard Street - 15 new spaces will be made available to Blue Badge holders (out of a total of 20 spaces on this site). The Council will work to improve the reliability of the current lift which is essential to allow access for shoppers who use a wheelchair.

- Culver Square – 4 additional spaces will be made available and promoted (the number will increase from 5 to 9).
- Priory Street – 5 additional spaces will be made available
- St Mary’s (car park) - 8 additional spaces will be made available
- North Hill - Additional spaces will be made available.
- Blue Badge holders will continue to be able to park on the High Street as before until 10.00am
- Blue Badge holders will continue to be able to park on Culver Street West, excluding Friday and Saturday. (Road barriers will go up at 11.00am in the morning to prevent further new access until 4.00pm, which allows blue badge parking up to 2pm) It is recognised that this facility remains important for allowing access to High Street banks and businesses’.
- Blue Badge holders will continue to enjoy general benefits associated with the Blue Badge Scheme which allows holders to park on (a) single or double yellow lines for up to three hours except where there is a ban on loading or unloading, and, (b) at ‘on-street’ parking meters and ‘pay-and-display’ machines for free and for as long as they need to<sup>7</sup>. The Scheme is of particular benefit at the eastern end of the High Street.

The above represents an increase in parking spaces for Blue Badge holders – from 26 non-marked parking spaces to 32 (fully accessible) standard spaces.

NB: Blue Badge holders will continue to be able to use the 13 (fully accessible) standard spaces in Castle Bailey. This facility will not be affected by this proposal.

The Council recognises that people with a disability have a range of different needs, and that this is reflected in the differential impact *between* individuals within the group as a whole. The Service has tried to take this into account when formulating the policy. It is recognised that for those people whose mobility is severely restricted, and who rely on the use of a wheelchair, fully accessible standard, marked out, spaces may be of more use than unmarked parking bays. For this group, level access is particularly important and the lift to Culver Square from St Johns Street continues to provide this. The Council has tried to ensure that key access to the Post Office and High Street banks continues to be available. Where Culver Street West cannot be used due to time restrictions, the Blue Badge Scheme allows double yellow parking (subject to Government guidance) on Head Street and behind the Post Office (in the vicinity of the Mercury Theatre). This proposal does not affect the current arrangements available at Nunn’s Road Multi Storey Car Park operated by NCP.

A note on consultation: Due to the relatively small size of the sample (283 questionnaire responses and comments), equality monitoring has included sex, race/ ethnicity and disability only. Of respondents: 51.3% were male and 48.7% were female; 97.3% identified as ‘White’, 0.01% identified as ‘Asian or Asian British’ and 0.02% identified as (of) ‘Mixed’ (ethnicity); 20.7% confirmed that they had a ‘Limiting long term illness’. These results approximately reflect the available (2001) Census data for the borough.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment – screening stage

11. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No likely negative impacts have been identified and this has been justified with reference to consultation, data or information. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
<b>Likely negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed.</b> √	<b>Sign off screening and finish.</b>
Likely negative impacts were identified but have not been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

12. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Howard Davies – Town Centre Project Manager

13. Date of completion:

- December 2011

14. Date for update or review of this screening:

- December 2014