



Oxfordshire County Council
Equalities Impact Assessment

WITNEY HIGH STREET AND MARKET SQUARE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

12/12/23

Contents

Section 1: Summary details	3
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	4
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....	7
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts.....	10
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts.....	11
Section 4: Review	12

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Place – Infrastructure Delivery
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Witney High Street and Market Square Enhancement Scheme
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New project
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>The project aims to enhance the public realm and encourage better active travel in Witney Town Centre. When designing changes to the public highway there is a potential to exclude access for people who identify with having disabilities, particularly those experiencing mobility issues.</p> <p>This may be impacted by narrow footway widths, poor walking surfaces, pedestrian crossings that don't comply with accessibility guidance and absence of blue badge parking.</p>
Completed By	Nick Howdle-Smith
Authorised By	John McLauchlan 02/02/2024
Date of Assessment	12/12/23

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The existing traffic restriction in Witney High Street and Market Square was implemented as a trial under an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) in summer 2020 and subsequently made permanent in December 2021 through the formal traffic regulation order process. The reduction of car traffic in the town centre had revealed opportunities to reallocate road space to contribute to a better pedestrian environment, improved cycling access and new retail and leisure activities.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>OCC applied for and was subsequently awarded £1.98m of active travel (tranche 3) funding for full project delivery comprising scheme development, design, consultation, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of the project. Early concept designs were drafted to support objectives included in the funding application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport • Rationalise existing space for taxis and on-street parking • Improve the road layouts at the junctions of High Street/Welch Way and Market Square/Corn Street to support the existing traffic restriction • Implement public realm enhancements <p>The development of active travel projects in the County help to meet the Council’s strategic priorities and Local and Connectivity Plan targets.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that</p>	<p>Before developing designs for the project OCC, conducted a community engagement exercise to understand what the priorities for the community are to inform the designs to be taken forward for implementation.</p>

supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.

Community Engagement involved a survey on the Let's Talk Oxfordshire engagement platform, in person stakeholder workshops, two face to face public events and other comments received by email and post.

The results from the Community Engagement online survey (643 participants) showed majority support for the scheme objectives. The survey also enabled OCC to profile respondents based on their demographics. The responses showed that the number of participants in the survey who declared that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months (15.4%) is similarly proportionate to the overall share of people in Witney who are identified as disabled under the Equalities Act (15.1%).

Accessibility is an essential consideration within the project, so overall responses have been compared to those who answered that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability to help identify differential preferences and potential negative impacts for that group.

Overall survey responses showed a similar level of support for the scheme objectives amongst disabled groups.

Overall survey responses showed a similar level of support for the specific improvements that people want to see implemented in the project amongst those with disabilities although, improved blue badge parking was an item that was more popular amongst disabled groups.

The full Community Engagement report is available to download at <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/witney-high-street>

Alternatives considered / rejected

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

The survey also underlines that blue badge parking is still an important facility for those groups. Any reallocation of parking to enable better loading provisions for businesses must be based on robust survey data that can provide accurate information on occupancy levels and user demand.

Although that accessibility groups were invited to participate in the engagement exercises, they did not accept invitations to the planned Transport and Accessibility workshop and did not contribute to the online survey. Officers will now reach out to Accessibility Groups again to help inform the designs from an accessibility perspective, ensuring compliance and legibility for user groups who maybe most impacted by the changes.

It is noted that OCC does not have a dedicated accessibility officer to assist with advice and design reviews of the built environment.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Changes to the highway can exclude those with disabilities where improvements made do not adhere to accessibility guidance / advice. However the project has the opportunity to increase the level of service for people with disabilities.	Engagement / consultation with accessibility groups to ensure the highway changes do not adversely impact disabled users	Nick Howdle-Smith, Project Manager, OCC	To be arranged with the relevant accessibility groups. Comments on the proposals for the preliminary design should be integrated before the public consultation in Spring 2024.
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Feedback from the Community Engagement can raise awareness of high preference for extra transport links to rural communities around Witney.	The project must ensure that bus service levels are maintained and also provides for future increases in services	Nick Howdle-Smith, Project Manager, OCC	Comments on the proposals for the preliminary design should be integrated before the public consultation in Spring 2024.
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other Council Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Value ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New public realm in the project area can enhance the walkability and new public spaces which has shown to improve: health/well-being, social cohesion, business trading activities and public events.	CCTV monitoring and better lighting can help to police/deter anti-social behaviour that may be attracted to new public realm areas	Nick Howdle-Smith, Project Manager, OCC	Comments on the proposals for the preliminary design should be integrated before the public consultation in Spring 2024

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	April 2024
Person Responsible for Review	Nick Howdle-Smith
Authorised By	John McLauchlan