

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EqlA please ensure you have read the EqlA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West and Taunton Council		
Version	1	Date Completed	Last updated 17.10.22

Description of what is being impact assessed

The EqlA assesses the impacts of the revised Masterplan for the Firepool redevelopment site, between Taunton Station to the north and the Priory Bridge Road to the south, which is due to go out for public consultation in November '22.

The Masterplan is not a planning application, so could change in the future when detailed applications are considered, but sets out the broad ambition for the site now, compared to the last approved application of 2018.

The proposals are based on a mixed use residential and leisure site, include the provision of new hard and soft landscaping to create a public open space, that duals to act as pedestrian and cycle access through the wider Firepool site from north to south, in addition to multiple cycling and walking routes through the site East-West. The boulevard space has been developed to not just be a transitional space, but also seeks to act as a high-quality amenity space where people spend time and where events can be

held. The central zone of the Boulevard will include a new water feature comprising of a basin of permanent water which will be enclosed on three sides with the fourth accessible from hard landscaped steps and a ramp.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

The District profile for SWT and the 2011 Census have been used.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this identification of potential impacts.

Consultation was also undertaken with Somerset Sight (RNIB), Taunton Disability Action Group, and the Council's Equality Group involving Members with particular skills and experience in this area particularly in regard to the public realm elements of the Southern Boulevard which is subject to a detailed application in parallel to the masterplan.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

		Negative impact	Neutral impact	Positive impact
Protected group	Summary of impact			
Age	A traffic free route from the train station to the town centre is highly likely to have a positive impact on health and safety for people in this protected category. The proposal will encourage modal shift to environmentally friendly transport rather than motorised vehicles, which will improve air quality and improve health for every individual.			
	Should the full ambition for the site be realised, the need to own a private motor vehicle is reduced, and site users and residents are therefore more likely to rely on public transport or other modes and models of transportation such as a car club, eBikes, eScooters, walking, cycling and the like. Being a town centre development, access to amenities is much closer than for suburban or edge of town homes.			
	For younger and older people coming to Taunton by train, this proposal is a huge improvement in providing connectivity to the main town centre.			

Age	Older people are more likely to suffer from multiple and complex disabilities where adjustments to the design of public spaces can have a beneficial impact. Following consultation events, these adjustments are considered in more detail below.				
Disability	Physical Impairment	Where there are significant changes in levels, people who have difficulty using steps have been provided with an alternative route or a resting platform if pushing others up a ramp. Specific areas within the proposal include the public realm water feature and amphitheatre.			
		Seating provision should enhance the enjoyment of this space for people with physical impairments			
	Visual Impairments	All pavements must comply with British Standards so as not to pose a safety risk for people with visual impairments			
		Street furniture can be a trip hazard and this is set in clearly defined areas to make this a neutral impact			
		Low level lighting is designed in a way that will not be hazardous for people with visual impairments			
		A traffic free route is inherently safer than one running alongside a highway			
		A route to/from the town centre where there are fewer motorised vehicles will improve air quality which has positive health implications for every individual			
	Hearing Impairments	Reduced vehicular traffic will improve safety			

	Psychiatric Disabilities	The real impact of the scheme for people with psychiatric disabilities is too broad to assess in detail here. However, improved air quality, fewer vehicles and more space for walking and cycling is likely to have a positive impact, as well as access and resting places with water frontage which are currently few or with restricted views.			
	Intellectual or Learning Disability	The real impact of the scheme for people with intellectual and learning disabilities is too broad to assess in detail here. However a route to/from the station, Firepool, Cricket Club and town centre where there are fewer motorised vehicles will improve air quality which has positive health implications for every individual			
	Neurological Disabilities	The real impact of the scheme on people with neurological disabilities is too broad to assess in detail here. However, improved air quality, fewer vehicles and more space for walking and cycling is likely to have a positive impact, as well as access and resting places with water frontage which are currently few or with restricted views.			
Gender reassignment		There is no evidence to suggest that people who share the protected characteristics of this group would be disproportionately affected by this proposal.			
Marriage and civil partnership		There is no evidence to suggest that people who share the protected characteristics of this group would be disproportionately affected by this proposal.			

Pregnancy and maternity	Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in people who are pregnant and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. In the context of the wider masterplan for Firepool, this proposal is likely to help towards maintaining air quality levels in this part of town and should therefore have a positive impact on pregnant women.			
	For pregnant people who are dependent on private car use, taxi or bus, the distance that would need to be covered on foot to use the boulevard route could be experienced as a negative impact by some. However it provides a more direct route than currently exists from the Station to the Cricket Club and into the Town Centre. For residents of the proposed scheme, access to amenities is likely to be improved due to the very central location and proximity to existing or newly provided services.			
Race and ethnicity	There is no evidence to suggest that people who share the protected characteristics of this group would be disproportionately affected by this proposal.			
Religion or belief	There is no evidence to suggest that people who share the protected characteristics of this group would be disproportionately affected by this proposal.			
Sex	There is no evidence to identify any impacts that would disproportionately affect men or disproportionately affect women.			
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence to suggest that people who share the protected characteristics of this group would be disproportionately affected by this proposal.			

Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	People on low incomes may be less likely to own or have access to a private motor vehicle and are therefore more likely to rely on public transport. Other modes of transport, such as Escooters, Ebikes or non-ownership based models such as the car club, if fully realised, could be a benefit. For people on low incomes coming to Taunton by train, this proposal is a huge improvement in connectivity to the main town centre.			
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Negative outcomes action plan
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
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If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Completed by:	Tim Bacon			
Date	18/10/22			
Signed off by:	Joe Wharton			
Date				
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:				
To be reviewed by: (officer name)				
Review date:	Post consultation (subject to changes being required) On submission of any detailed applications based on this Masterplan			