

# Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

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

<b>Organisation prepared for</b>	<b>Somerset West and Taunton Council</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>20/06/2022, updated 08/07/2022 and 09/12/2022</b>

## Description of what is being impact assessed

### Connecting our Garden Communities

Connecting our Garden Communities is a plan for ensuring that modern, futureproofed walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments across Taunton Garden Town. The plan focuses on the evidence and justification for a network of connecting routes across the town. The plan includes comments in the route summaries about considerations to be taken into account in route design. However, it does not go as far as determining exactly what level of infrastructure will be delivered along every section of each route. Further work is required to take each route and specific interventions within them forward through concept and detailed design stages and further EqlAs will need to be undertaken as schemes progress through the design process at a project level. The plan references the Public Realm Design Guide SPD and the Government's Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 guidance on cycle infrastructure design, for which inclusive cycling is the underlying theme so that people of all ages and abilities are considered. It also references the Government's Inclusive Mobility guidance and in its final version refers to walking, *wheeling* and cycling in recognition of wider inclusive mobility. It recognises that mobility needs to respect equalities and inclusive mobility, and that following LTN1/20 and Inclusive Mobility guidance can assist in this respect. The scope was decided to include both walking and cycling, with the initial objective being to accommodate full LTN1/20 compliant segregated walking and cycling routes. The expectation in this was that this would provide routes suitable for all users of all abilities. The final plan now explicitly refers to wheeling as well in order to recognise the importance of wider inclusive mobility. As routes progress through the design path, it may be that full compliance with LTN1/20 will not be possible in every location, and as such further work to assure an inclusive approach may be required at that point – but this is beyond the scope of this plan. More detailed EqlAs will need to be undertaken as schemes progress through the design process at a project level.

This EqlA identifies in general terms the likely impact of the general focus on provision of walking, wheeling and cycling routes on different groups of people taken in the round, rather than on a detailed basis. The plan relates to major developments at the Garden Communities around Taunton, which will be subject to future planning applications for which it is intended that this document will

become a material consideration. Where the Council determines planning applications, it exercises a statutory function, and as such the Public Sector Equality Duty is relevant. If necessary, depending upon the detail and context of proposed development, (specifically where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result), specific EqIAs may be necessary to understand the impacts of that specific development.

It also needs to be recognised that not all people sharing a protected characteristic within SWT will necessarily experience the same impact (be it positive or negative) from a particular policy, decision or focus.

### **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 Council's proposed final Connecting our Garden Communities plan has been reviewed.

**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 initial identification of potential impacts.

The Plan was subject to public consultation, including with relevant community and interest groups and individuals associated with protected characteristics. Consultation complied with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and invited a wide range of individuals and organisations to respond including disability, diversity and multicultural groups listed within the planning policy consultation database. Responses to the consultation have informed the final plan proposed for approval.

## Analysis of impact on protected groups

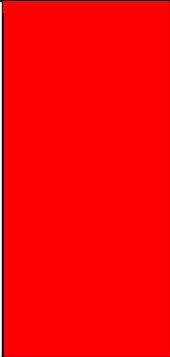
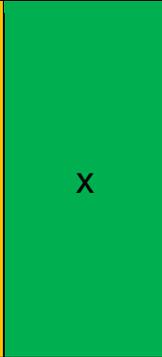
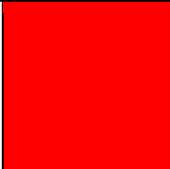
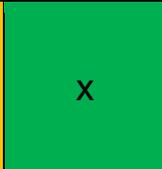
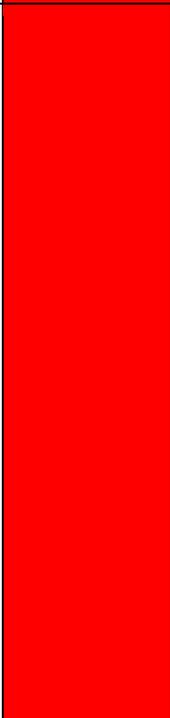
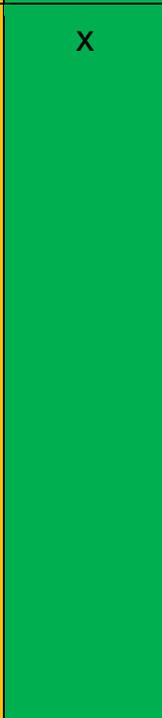
The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail 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.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population across all ages.</p> <p><u>Older people</u> Older people are statistically more likely to be affected by reduced physical mobility. Therefore, a plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling links may not affect older people as positively as it may younger people. In addition to this, older people with reduced mobility are more likely to therefore rely upon travel by vehicular transport, as such, a plan focusing on improving walking and cycling links, which may in places necessitate a detriment to vehicular traffic access, flows and capacity could have potential to adversely impact older people. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the elderly in the long term. The Plan now explicitly refers to walking, <i>wheeling</i> and cycling in recognition of the need for wider inclusivity.</p> <p><u>Younger people</u> Younger people are statistically less likely to be affected by reduced physical mobility. Younger people under the legal age limit are unable to drive, and as such are more likely to need to walk and cycle. Therefore, a plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling</p>			<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>

	<p>links may affect younger people more positively than it may older people. Additionally, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the population in general over the long term, particularly if journeys to school are prioritised as suggested – instilling an active lifestyle from a young age. E-scooters tend to be popular within younger age groups. At this stage, the Taunton trial e-scooters are able to be used on roads and on cycleways, however, personal e-scooters are illegal to be used on cycleways and only legal to be used on roads if registered, taxed and insured. If e-scooters (trial or private following legislative review) were to be restricted from using cycleways then this could disproportionately negatively affect younger people. The plan makes no reference to the suitability or treating of e-scooters in relation to the routes as this is beyond the scope of the document.</p>			
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Designed in the right way, in accordance with LTN1/20, such infrastructure should enable safe, convenient access for all irrespective of disability or not. The Plan now explicitly refers to walking, <i>wheeling</i> and cycling in recognition of the need for wider inclusivity.</p> <p><u>Reduced physical mobility</u>  A plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling links may not affect people with reduced physical mobility as positively as it may others. In addition to this, people with reduced mobility are more likely to therefore rely upon travel by vehicular transport, as such, a plan focusing on improving walking and cycling links, which may in places necessitate a detriment to vehicular traffic access, flows and capacity could have potential to adversely impact older people. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20</p>			<p>X</p> <p>X</p>

	<p>has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the population in general over the long term – including reducing frailty and risks of reduced mobility in the long term. LTN1/20 standards have been designed with all users including adaptive cycles (e.g. hand cycling, tricycles) and wheelchairs in mind. This reinforces the importance of working to accommodate full LTN1/20 standards wherever possible.</p> <p><u>Visually impaired</u> Inappropriately designed walking and cycling routes can be of serious detriment to the visually impaired. Failure to design appropriately may lead to the environment being illegible to the visually impaired, increasing the likelihood for collisions and injury and severing access for such users. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all.</p> <p><u>Respiratory conditions</u> Air pollutants can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma. The aim of this plan is to improve the ability for people to walk and cycle through provision of associated infrastructure, and as such increase modal shift away from motorised vehicles. This approach serves to mitigate and avoid air pollution impacts, particularly associate with travel from the new Garden Community developments. As such, over time and in combination with other policies and proposals it should help improve air quality across Taunton and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for those with such conditions. Importantly, the plan proposes that East Reach (an Air Quality Management Zone) is a key part of the walking and cycling network. Shifting people from motorised vehicles to walking and cycling along this corridor could drastically improve outcomes for this group in this area.</p>			<p>X</p> <p>X</p>
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<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in pregnant women and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. The aim of this plan is to improve the ability for people to walk and cycle through provision of associated infrastructure, and as such increase modal shift away from motorised vehicles. This approach serves to mitigate and avoid air pollution impacts, particularly associate with travel from the new Garden Community developments. As such, over time and in combination with other policies and proposals it should help improve air quality across Taunton and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for this group. LTN1/20 standards have been designed with all users including people pushing buggies/double buggies and using bikes with child trailers/cargo-bike type models in mind. This reinforces the importance of working to accommodate full LTN1/20 standards wherever possible. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X

<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			
<b>Sex</b>	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Studies have shown that men and women tend to have different travel patterns and choices of transport mode, influenced by the types of trip being undertaken as well as actual and perceived barriers to movement. Personal safety, convenience and appearance/perception are key factors in this regard. The provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all. Route audits have actively considered these issues, and the choice of routes has been influenced by the potential to improve outcomes in this regard. Detailed design will further need to consider these points. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X
<b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<p><u>Low Income</u> Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. It is also the cheapest form of transport. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p> <p><u>Rural Isolation</u> Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. The plan identifies a number of aspirational links between rural areas and services and facilities within the Garden Communities and wider Garden Town, as such it has the potential to positively impact upon this group in the rural areas immediately surrounding Taunton. However, most affected by rural isolation are significantly beyond the boundaries of this plan – for people in these areas the plan would provide very little positive or negative impact. Although, connection with the Park &amp; Ride sites may suggest some minor positive impact. The document refers to the reasoning behind its geographical scope. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X  X