

# 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>South Somerset District Council</b>		
<b>Version:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Date Completed:</b>	<b>20.10. 2020</b>

**Description of what is being Equality Impact Assessed:**

The closure of streets to traffic in Yeovil to provide adequate space for social distancing in the main retail streets of Yeovil. This covers the closure of High Street at its` junction with Princes Street. The closure of Middle Street at its junction with Union Street and Wine Street. The implication of this closure will mean that buses will temporarily stop in the Westminster Street and Clarence Street while there is a reduced service. The Taxi rank will also be inaccessible in Silver Street so will be temporarily located in two locations at Peter Street and Westminster Street. The bays in High Street for blue badge holders will be moved temporarily to Princes Street.

**This is an assessment for the emergency measure.**

**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

This set of measures is being applied to enable social distancing in line with the Covid Regulations that have be created as a consequence of the Global Pandemic.

We have not been able to carry out a wide-ranging consultation with all affected groups. Yeovil town council has been contacted and advised of the proposals. They did not raise any significant issues. The council has written to all licensed taxi drivers to explain the changes, which are aimed at creating enough space for residents to enter retail areas safely. The bus companies have

been contacted by the County Council about the measures. The council sought advice from Access for All who are the council's key consultee group for the disability community.

Street changes are in response to the combination of narrow pavements, which would create issues if the traffic was allowed to park in bays across this area. This would present the possibility of people not being able to actively social distance. Traffic in these areas is also being removed to minimise clashes.

### **Implications for blue badge holders**

This assessment builds on an earlier proposal for Middle Street where we have been implementing a temporary Traffic Regulation Order, which has been in place for circa 15 months. In that proposal we researched official studies into pedestrianisation and the issues disabled people can experience in town centres including: -

- The RNIB Report – 'Who put that there'
- RNIB Street Charter Toolkit
- The article: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmenvtra/167/167xp03.htm>
- Department of Transport – Can I get a blue badge
- Blue Badge Scheme statistics, England 2018 Department of Transport

We also used Yeovil Town Centre car parking data including the number of Disabled car parking bays.

Whilst it is difficult to get accurate figures on the number of people with disabilities at a District Level, and data regarding the proportion of the population is using the Town Centre at any one time, the Somerset Intelligence website provides the following information for Somerset from the 2011 census.

- 13,317 working-age residents (3.5% of those aged 16-74) described themselves as economically inactive because of long-term sickness or disability.
- That there are nearly 9,000 households (3.9% of all households in Somerset) containing at least one adult with a long-term disability or health condition and dependent children.
- In South Somerset there are 96,462 people aged 16-64, therefore 3.5% would equate to approximately 3376 people.

Following on from discussions with individuals, we then carried out further exploration of blue badge statistics as they relate to Somerset.

In Somerset, as of March 2018, 29,400 blue badges were held, representing 5.3% of the population of the county. Applying the same approach and percentage in South Somerset, this would equate to 8,862 blue badge holders. These figures are broadly similar to the available census information from 2011. Clearly not all of those identifying in the census would claim a blue badge.

At the current time a percentage of this population will undoubtedly be shielding in line with government guidance, there is assumed to be a significant area of crossover for blue badge holders with this group. This will of course apply to conditions such as severe COPD and other disabilities, which enhance the need to park very close to the location, which is being visited.

These bays that were retained in Middle Street will be temporarily suspended and the bays provided in Union Street. This reduces the availability of on street bays. The council is considering provision of additional bays in the nearby Peter Street car park to add to the existing marked bays.

The application of the closures also relocates the existing bays from High street to Princes Street, which is a distance of 150 Metres. This is a comparative distance to the nearest bank but does create additional distance to the main shopping area. This is a direct swap of spaces so causes no reduction in overall number of spaces.

In addition to these changes to on street bays, of the 1448 car parking spaces available in the 17 SSDC owned town centre pay and display car parks in and around the town centre (2 car parks were ruled out for this exercise which are at the extremity of the town centre) 84 are disabled accessible spaces with room for a further approximately 30 spaces on-street. There are also additional spaces in other privately owned car parks, for example Tesco, some of which are free.

Given that not all disabled people are going to be using the town centre at the same time and that many of the accessible spaces in the car parks are already currently underutilised, it is considered that this swap of spaces provides adequate provision for those parking in the centre, especially when taking into account the likely reduced demand at the current time due to the Lockdown measures that are in place.

### **Implications for Transport Providers**

The taxi rank has been split into two sections. One is located in Westminster Street and the other in Peter Street. This will enable pick-ups either side of the closure in Middle Street. The Peter Street location allows access to Middle Street. Taxi ranks have been visited by SCC Highways team who have noted significantly reduced usage. Due to Lockdown, Licensed vehicle usage is down with significant cleaning requirements between each passenger. Therefore, provision of a split Hackney rank in nearby locations is being trialled. Private Hire vehicles do not use the ranks so there is no impact on them of this change of location.

The bus companies will need to utilise temporary stops in Westminster Street or Clarence Street. General parking bays in Westminster Street have been removed to accommodate this work. There is believed to be adequate general parking across the town in council and private car parks. This change will be negligible for general-purpose uses.

The bus companies serve individuals who are unable to travel by other methods and of course have a section of customers who are vulnerable. It is unknown whether this is disproportionate at the current time due to the lockdown measures being in place.

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

This is currently transport providers and local councils/ councillors.

Further work is required with all parties and the closures are to be kept under constant review.

The needs of managing the pandemic have taken precedence but we are taking measures to try to contact all relevant representative groups.

## 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
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The change would negatively affect people with mobility difficulties, including older people who currently use the on-street car parking, as they would have to park in alternate locations. The over 70`s are in the vulnerable groups identified by Government for the purposes of Covid so would be travelling less into the town centre. Click and collect in some retail premises will need to be via alternate locations.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would positively impact people who have hearing or sight loss, as studies show that parked cars present obstacles for people who are blind and partially sighted, and the increasing quietness of vehicles makes crossing the road riskier for those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment. Pedestrianisation would assist safe movement through the town.</li> <li>Wheelchair users would have much more room to safely pass pedestrians and other wheelchair/mobility aid users</li> <li>The change would negatively affect people with mobility difficulties, including older people who currently use the on-street car parking, as they would have to park elsewhere.</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This group could be positively affected as, anecdotally, parents have commented on the safety of having parked cars in this high footfall area, as the car doors open straight into the pavement and affect the visibility of children crossing the street.</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not identified any specific impacts on this protected group relating to this proposal</li> </ul>	□	☒	□
<b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers supporting those in the Age and Disability protected groups will be impacted but the main impact is felt by those individuals within the impacted groups</li> </ul>	☒	□	□

### 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
<p>The proposals are being implemented to enable social distancing. These will be managed by “wardens” during the core retail hours to assist traffic and individuals in the town centre.</p> <p>Measures will reviewed at least weekly and amended to enable access to be maintained and social distancing to occur.</p>	20/10/2020	Marie Ainsworth	The active travel cell will receive updates from the SSDC lead	☒
SSDC also provides an additional one-hour’s free parking for disabled motorists in its other Pay and Display car parks in and around the Town Centre. This provides the additional time some disabled users require to return to their vehicles without limiting the time they are able to spend conducting their town centre business.	20/10/2020	Ian Timms	This is already in place within adopted charging policy	☒

<p>There is a Shopmobility Scheme operating in Yeovil that provides powered scooters, as well as powered and manual wheelchairs for use by mobility-impaired people. This helps to increase people's independence and reduce reliance on a carer to use the Town Centre. This is currently unavailable due to practical issues around operation.</p>	20/10/2020	Ian Timms	Encourage to re-open when safe to do so. Review in one month from implementation.	☒
<p>Three negative areas of impact relating to age disability and carers are created by the changes to access. Signage has been provided and communications through a wide range of channels to inform residents of the temporary restrictions. This adds to the Government's advice on social distancing.</p>	20/10/2020	Marie Ainsworth	Review weekly to ensure approach delivers for town centre	
<p>There are an equivalent number of spaces being provided in Peter Street Car park and on Princes Street, which are a direct swap of provision for displaced spaces.</p> <p>These will be marked up as temporary spaces to enable access to the town centre area.</p>	20/10/2020	Marie Ainsworth	Review Weekly to ensure approach works for town centre – will use the wardens	
<p><b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b></p>				
<p>We believe this presents a wide range of adjustments that are both reasonable and proportionate and meet the requirements of the public sector equalities duty.</p>				

<b>Completed by (Officer name and role):</b>	<b>Marie Ainsworth, Economy Specialist</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20/10 2020</b>
<b>Manager/Director Sign off (Name and position)</b>	<b>Natalie Fortt, Regeneration Programme Manager</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20/10//2020</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off (Name):</b>	<b>David Crisfield</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20/10/2020</b>
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	<b>Marie Ainsworth</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>TBC</b>