

Scheme – The Access Fund project
(Adapted from LSTF equality note)

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and Plan

Introduction

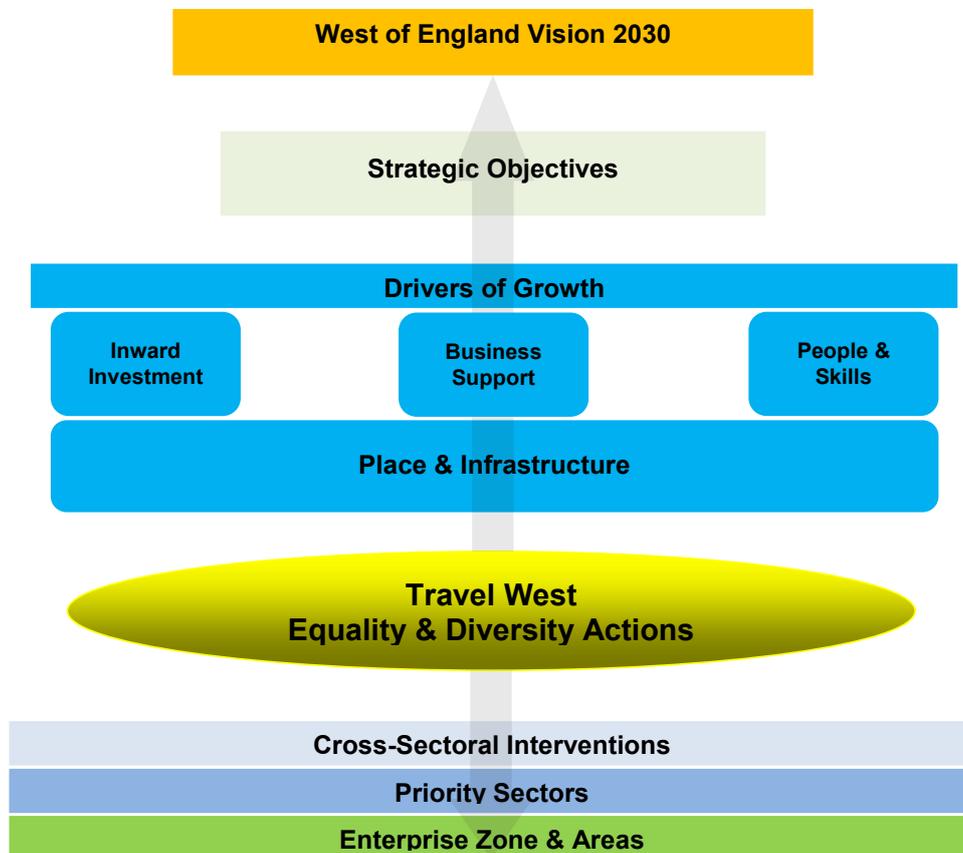
The over-arching message communicated via the West of England Vision is that of an **“Economic Region Built on Success and Delivering Success”**.

Underpinning the Vision are five Strategic Objectives:-

1. Create the right conditions for business to thrive. Give confidence and certainty to our investors to attract and retain investment to stimulate and incentivise growth.
2. Enhance & protect our natural & built environmental assets to build our resilience to climate change.
3. Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of essential infrastructure including transport and housing to unlock suitable locations for economic growth.
4. Shape the local workforce to provide people with skills that businesses need to succeed and that will provide them with job opportunities.
5. Ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap.

The Access West project has a role to play in the delivery of each of these strategic objectives, and in particular, objective 3 aligns with our central purpose.

Access West recognises that delivering excellence in Equality & Diversity is intrinsically linked to the successful achievement of the WoE 2030 Vision and as such we have set out carefully considered actions, the delivery of which will ensure our work has maximum impact on the achievement of the strategic objectives and ultimately the realisation of the 2030 Vision.



Equality & Diversity and the Access West Project

The central principle of the project concerns increasing the accessibility by sustainable travel which is critical to supporting growth in our Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas where we expect to see up to 70,000 new jobs. Existing road conditions are a barrier to many people choosing to walk and cycle and there is a need to make improvements to facilitate safe independent mobility for all and not just for those able to cope with high levels of traffic. In addition, by providing improved facilities for walking and cycling, the scheme will enhance the health of the local population by promoting active modes of travel. The benefits will be realised by employers, who will have a healthier, fitter workforce with a reduction in absence through sickness, and by the Health Authorities, through reduced demand upon healthcare services arising from a healthier population.

In respect of equality and diversity, central principles relating to the Access West project are:

- Ensuring accessible sustainable travel modes are in place;
- Encouraging more cycling and walking by those who are already more likely to use these methods (e.g. Males);
- Encouraging those who are less likely to use these methods to participate (e.g. Females).

Taking approaches which are tailored to the needs of diverse groups in society is a core way of ensuring that the number of people using these methods is maximised, which contributes to the identified strategic objectives and drivers of growth as stated above and within the below table.

There is a valuable evidence base from which the project has drawn key equality & diversity related information as shown below:

Gender	Improved cycling infrastructure through bicycle paths and lanes that provide a high degree of separation from motor traffic is likely to be important for increasing transportation cycling amongst under-represented population groups such as women ⁱ .
Children & Young People	<p>Independent mobility appears to be an important independent determinant of weekday physical activity for both boys and girls. Physical activity and factors such as independent mobility are likely to be influenced by the type of neighbourhood (housing density, land use mix, available green space) as well as perceptions of neighbourhood. Parents may be much more likely to allow independent mobility if they perceive their environment to be safe and traffic density to be lowⁱⁱ.</p> <p>There is a significant positive relationship between physical activity, improved cognitive performance and academic achievementⁱⁱⁱ.</p> <p>Research has found a possible link between traffic-related air pollution outside people's homes and the onset of asthma in children during the first eight years of life. Higher levels of nitrogen dioxide, PM2.5 and soot (generated by greater traffic volumes) were more likely to be recorded at the homes of those children who developed asthma and asthma symptoms^{iv}.</p> <p>Cycle training is valuable in terms of cycling safety skills. However, other strategies are needed when promoting cycling to school such as that any training should focus more on real cycling experiences, so that children are able to deal with traffic on school journeys, and on providing educational support to ensure safe journeys to school^v.</p> <p>Research has shown that far more English children were accompanied by an adult on the journey home from school in 2010 than in 1971. In 1971, 86 per cent of the parents of primary school children surveyed said that their children were allowed to travel home from school alone. By 1990, this had dropped markedly to 35 per cent, and there was a further drop to 25 per cent being allowed to do so in 2010. In 2010, in England there was a marked increase in adult accompaniment on non-school journeys, with 62 per cent of the journeys in 2010 being accompanied, compared to 41 per cent in 1971^{vi}.</p>

<p>Older Age</p>	<p>The intensity of physical effort during cycling on an electrically assisted bicycle is sufficiently high to contribute to the physical activity guidelines for moderate-intensity health-enhancing physical activity for adults^{vii}.</p> <p>The risk of increasing falls among a largely sedentary older population can be reduced through physical activity. Walking, as the most readily available physical activity, can contribute to the prevention of falls through maintaining or increasing leg muscle and bone strength^{viii}.</p> <p>Cycling is a form of physical activity with particular benefits for older people. It is non-weight bearing and therefore has less impact on the joints than jogging or other running sports, and several studies of disease causation have shown significant risk reduction for all-cause and cancer mortality, cardiovascular disease, colon and breast cancer, and obesity morbidity in middle-aged and elderly cyclists. Cycling may also contribute to improved quality of life for older people, by enhancing social networks and building empowerment, and can be incorporated easily into a daily routine. Successful methods used to promote cycling to older people include: age-targeted cycling skills courses, encouragement for Bicycle User Groups to reach out to older people, widespread availability of cycling maps, advertising the multiple benefits of cycling and continued improvement to cycle paths. Fear of cars and other motorised traffic is a strong barrier to cycling across all age groups so investment in infrastructure should also have benefits across the population^{ix}.</p>
<p>Disability (including mental health)</p>	<p>Psychologists have long recognised the potentially detrimental effect of the commute. Most studies of the commute and stress find that active travel, followed by public transport use are the least stressful modes and that active travel is often reported as a positive experience in terms of stress management^x.</p> <p>The intensity of physical effort during cycling on an electrically assisted bicycle is sufficiently high to contribute to the physical activity guidelines for moderate-intensity health-enhancing physical activity for adults^{xi}.</p> <p>There are more accessible options for cycling today than ever before. These include hand cycles, trikes, wheelchair friendly cycles, side-by-side cycles, one up one down cycles, recumbents, tandems and steer from rear tandems. As such there is large potential for promoting facilities and options which are suitable for a wide range of impairment types.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Research has noted that there would be substantial implications of a policy approach which seeks to mitigate barriers to walking and cycling so that (door to door) networks can be travelled on foot or bicycle without disproportionate risk^{xii}. This is important information in respect of promotion for females, younger and older people.</p> <p>Evidence also informs us that design principles and good management can address conflicts that can occur within shared spaces (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians). This is important information in respect of promotion for disabled people and both younger and older people.</p>
<p>Economic Benefit</p>	<p>Economic analysis of cycling interventions suggests that average benefit per additional cyclist is £590 per year, and that small increases in cycling numbers can justify investment in new cycling infrastructure principally due to the health benefits which accrue^{xiii}.</p> <p>There is a high cost to employers from absenteeism and potentially even greater costs from presenteeism. Increasing physical activity through active travel opportunities and activities during the work day are highly likely to be cost effective in improving health^{xiv}.</p> <p>Within schemes, there is also an identified benefit in relation to tourism. Using the principle that diverse groups have diverse needs and promoting opportunities accordingly has the potential to maximise usage amongst visitors to our areas.</p>

<p>Health</p>	<p>The most substantive epidemiological study to date was carried out in Copenhagen involving 13,375 women and 17,265 men aged 20-93 who were randomly selected from a population of 90,000 living in central Copenhagen^{xv}. Of this cohort, 14,976 cycled regularly to work, for about three hours per week on average. The researchers concluded that: “Even after adjustments for other risk factors, including leisure time activity, those who did not cycle to work experienced a 39% higher mortality rate than those who did.” This is a very important finding. It provides direct evidence from a large scale study that regular cyclists are likely to have a lower risk of death compared to non-cyclists, irrespective of other physical activity they do. Additionally, later analysis has shown higher death rates among those who reduced their level of cycling compared to those who continue to cycle^{xvi}.</p> <p>Walking is the most basic form of physical activity humans can undertake to maintain good health. A key paper setting out the benefits of walking was published in 1997 and remains an important resource for walking promotion^{xvii}. This set out that regular walking reduces the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, deaths from all causes, and helps to counter depression and maintain mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Countries with the highest levels of active travel generally have the lowest obesity rates^{xviii}. Mixed use developments, at high density, with good connectivity for walking and cycling significantly affects body weight and reduce the risk of weight gain^{xix}.</p> <p>The order of the difference in fitness in favour of cyclists is equivalent to that enjoyed by being five years younger (cycling in general) or up to 10 years younger (for regular cyclists)^{xx}.</p> <p>A growing body of research reveals that road transport noise can cause sleep disturbance, cardiovascular disease, elevated hormone levels, psychological problems and even premature death; studies on children have identified cognitive impairment, worsened behaviour and diminished quality of life. People with existing mental or physical health problems are the most likely to be sensitive to traffic noise. Fifty-five per cent of those living in urban areas with more than 250 000 inhabitants in the EU - almost 67 million people - endure daily road noise levels above the lower EU benchmark for excess exposure^{xxi}.</p>
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As a result of the analysis of the messages emerging from the Strategic Economic Plan Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and our specific research, we have set our objectives for equality & diversity which will accelerate the successful delivery of the WoE SEP.

Our Aim, Objectives and Actions

Aim

Our overall aim is to ensure that within all of our work, equality & diversity principles and values are applied, and actions proactively taken which contribute to the maximisation of our success in delivering and promoting sustainable travel options.

Objectives and Actions

Objectives	Key Actions	Intended Impact
To ensure that our extensive research portfolio is utilised to enhance the attractiveness of schemes.	We will conduct a review of the schemes to ensure that all research is taken account of during scheme design.	Features that meet the needs of and attract diverse groups are planned for from the earliest stages.
To promote schemes pre and post builds, ensuring that the needs of diverse groups are targeted (as highlighted via our equality & diversity related research above).	As part of the consultation of schemes we will tailor our engagement and promotion activity with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Leisure sector • Communities • Schools to deliver key motivating messages to target groups as identified within our research.	Maximised usage by all, in particular identified target groups, through the delivery of messages that motivate and are relevant to the needs of diverse groups.
To measure the success of our planning and promotion of schemes.	We will undertake relevant activities at one of our interventions to understand the impact of our interventions in relation to diverse groups.	<p>An enhanced understanding of how the needs of diverse groups can be met.</p> <p>An enhanced understanding of successful interventions and engagement in developing usage amongst diverse groups.</p> <p>The above will enable us to influence best practice both now and in the future.</p>

The above objectives will be continuously monitored in order to gauge both progress and the impact of these actions on the achievement of our project objectives.

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