

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Bristol Streetspace: Old City & King St & WECA Feasibility & Development Fund
Directorate and Service Area	Strategic City Transport, Economy Of Place
Name of Lead Officer	James Morvan/Ben Hanna

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown conditions has had a dramatic effect on Bristol's transport network - challenging deeply ingrained travel patterns and behaviour in a way that we've never seen before.

Following a central government directive in 2020, Strategic City Transport was directed to identify measures that would help protect public transport services and ensure that residents could practice social distancing safely. This included providing opportunities for increasing space for walking and cycling at local high streets in more detail.

Funding was allocated to several high streets and core routes across Bristol through a Streetspace budget (emergency active travel funding). The support and funding under this budget were primarily aimed at supporting the development of a TTRO and temporary measures; but with the aim of moving towards a permanent scheme and formal TRO.

The area of focus includes:

The Old City area is the historic city core of Bristol and is characterised by many small establishments with very limited space for social distancing. With new central government advice on how many customers can use each

establishment, this area is a key priority for the Council's Streetspace schemes.

The proposal is laid out in greater detail in a separate design document, but the principles behind the scheme were clear: to create a pedestrian-priority area in the Old City with vehicle access limited (except bicycle users) to specified times of day for deliveries or other access needs.

There was an impact on many vehicle users, including disabled users, requiring changes to be put in place around the pedestrianisation area including further provision for disabled users and careful use of delivery schedules. However, the proposal was designed to significantly improve safety for non-motorised users, as well as the key benefit of enabling safe use of the area with space for social distancing.

King St is an important commercial street with limited numbers of residents, with a high percentage of hospitality organisations that have been affected by the Covid crisis. The proposal includes the suspension of parking bays and the pedestrianisation of the area between King William Avenue and Queen Charlotte St.

The proposals did manage access to the area for delivery vehicles and disabled users and stimulated the need to review local provision, facilities and the experience of place on a door to door journey for disabled users. As a constrained space for pedestrians and vehicles and a large number of hospitality organisations, King St was identified as a high priority for the release of space for social distancing. Making changes that increase availability of space for pedestrians was designed to have a significant positive impact both on safety in the Covid crisis and the commercial viability of the area.

Additional funding has now been secured through WECA's Feasibility & Development Fund to resource design work and research to support walking and cycling. This supersedes the Streetspace scheme and comes at a time when social distancing measures and the impact of the pandemic in the UK is subsiding. The aims and objectives remain the same; with the addition of public realm design work being proposed.

Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

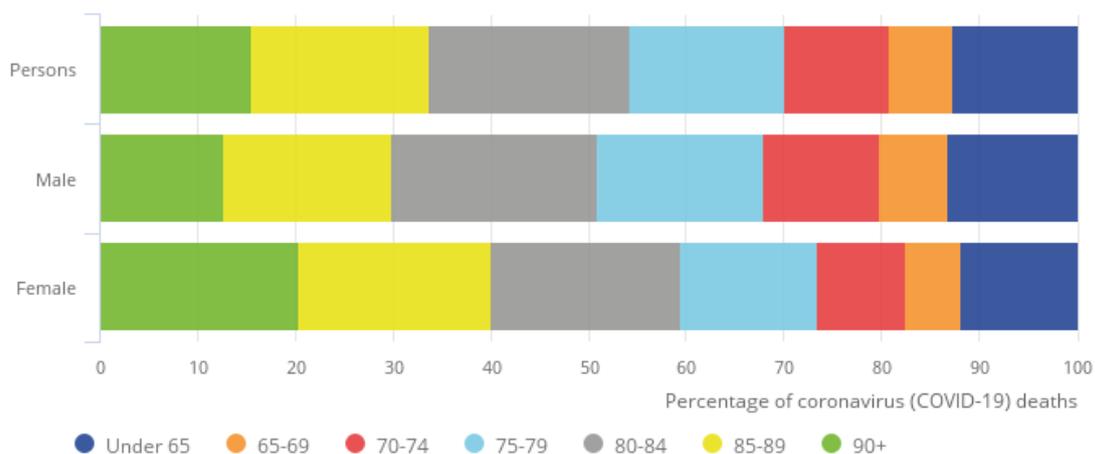
COVID 19

The original Streetspace scheme was deployed during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 before the roll out of a global vaccination programme. Most Protected Characteristic Groups were likely to be disproportionately impacted by the virus and susceptible to it having an adverse impact on their health and wellbeing.

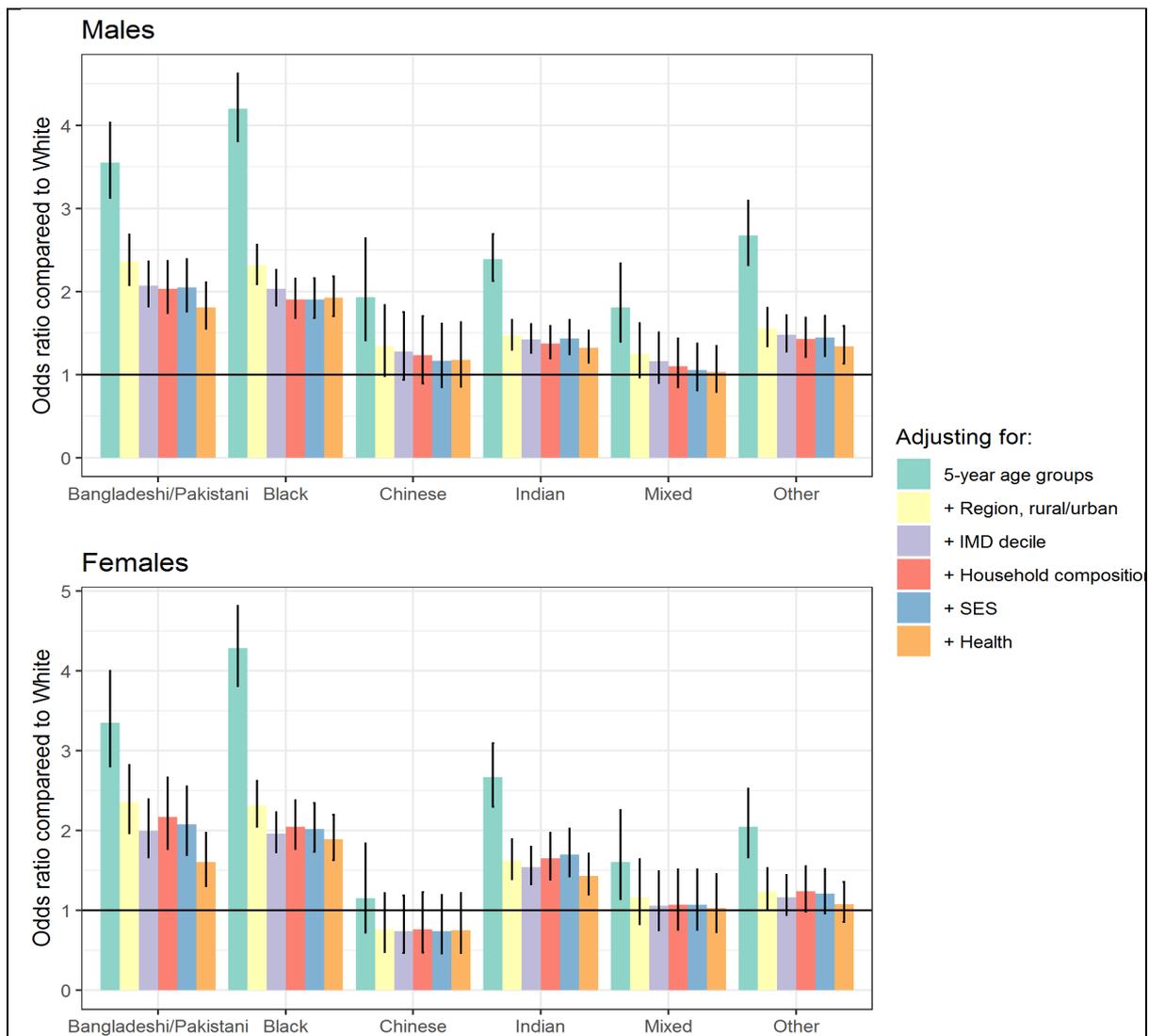
Nationally, age and ethnicity are large factors in Covid-19 deaths, with elderly and ethnic minority groups suffering disproportionately from health impacts.

Figure 7: Those aged 85 to 89 years made up the largest proportion of COVID-19 deaths

Percentage of deaths due to COVID-19 that were in each age group, England and Wales, occurring in March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Analysis of deaths involving COVID-19



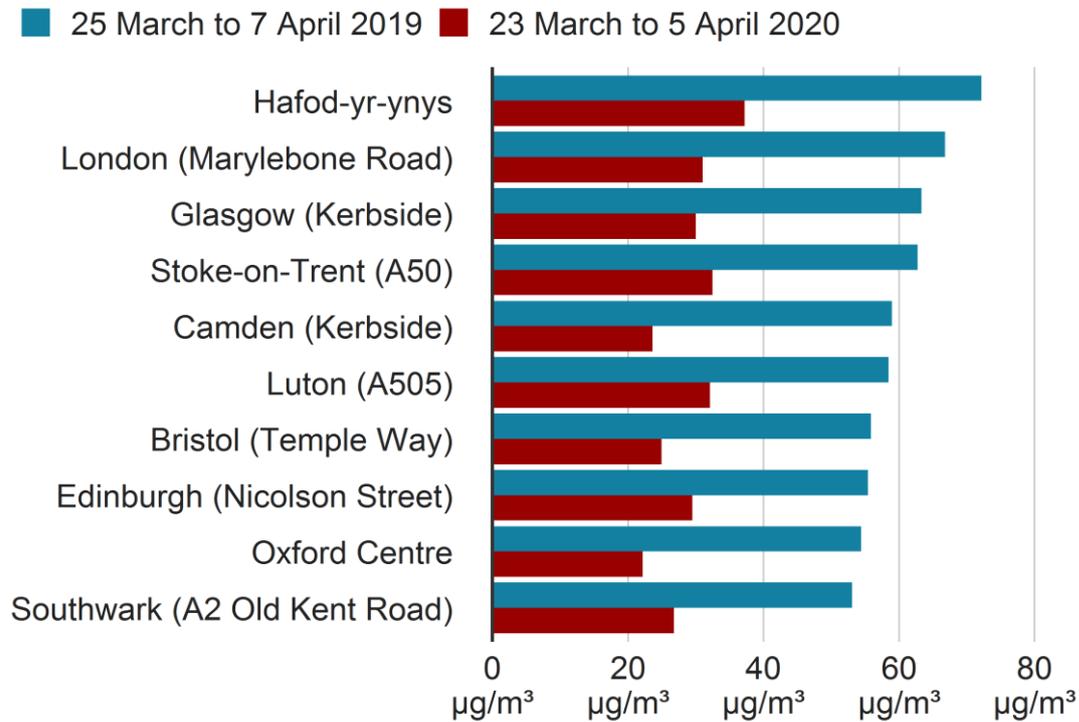
COVID 19 had a significant influence on local travel behaviours; both positively in terms of increased levels of active travel levels, and negatively; particularly the reduction on public or third sector transport provision and the implications of limited access on loneliness and isolation. Some headline facts include:

- Significant (>50%) reduction in travel to destinations such as workplaces, retail, leisure, transport hubs
- Significant increase in local travel (>15%) with communities and to parks and green spaces.
- Significant increases in the number of people walking and cycling - comparator cities est. 40% and 60% respectively
- Significant drop in bus patronage of 8-10% compared to baseline

- Reduction in air pollution (namely daily No2 emissions as illustrated in the graph below)

Air pollution has fallen compared with last year

Daily average NO2 emissions



µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic metre

Source: Defra

BBC

Central Ward Characteristics

There are other indicators and evidence leads to suggest that Protected Characteristic Groups would be impacted by changes to access in and around the Old City and King Street as plans for pedestrianisation and timed closures continue to be pursued. This not only refers to access and mobility, but challenges with interpreting or receiving information (a critical indicator for informing the engagement process for the project)

The headline figures collected and collated across Central Ward through the recent [Quality of Life \(2019/2020\)](#) survey are as follows:

- Almost 2% (1.9%) of residents feel accessibility issues stop them from getting involved in their community (just over the city average).

- Almost 9% (8.9%) of residents noted transport issues stop them getting involved in their community (just above city average)
- A very low 2.1% of residents were uncomfortable using digital services, the second lowest in Bristol and well below the city average.
- Around 90% of residents are in 'good health' across the Central Ward; a few percentage points above the city average.
- Central Ward has the third highest level of loneliness (6.1%) in the city; almost double the city average.
- The percentage of people whose physical health prevents them from leaving the home when they want to is 5.8% (below city average)
- A relatively low percentage (4.8%) of residents have an illness or health condition that limits day to day activities (below city average)
- 7.7% of residents noted that inaccessible public transport prevents them from leaving their home when they want (below city average)
- The impact of parking on preventing residents leaving their home is relatively low (13.1%) compared to the city average (18%)

[The Central Ward Profile \(2020\)](#)

- 'Significantly High' proportion of 16-24 year olds (50.4%) relative to Bristol average (15.7%). 'Significantly Low' proportion of more elderly age groups (40+) compared to the Bristol average. It will therefore be important to cater for such as younger, more mobile audience (high levels of private renting) who represent half of the total residents in the Central Ward.
- A very low proportion of residents (43%) relative to the Bristol average (63%) feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. This may be due to several factors, including the transient nature of the population or the lack of space and activities where the population can spend time and co-exist in civic spaces.
- Somewhat inevitably, the Central Ward has the highest crime offence rate per 1,000 population at just over 400 (all crime); compared to the city average of 113.5. The perception and actual levels of safety are key considerations in how equalities group may interact with a space. 50% of residents feel anti-social behaviour is a problem locally (compared to 33% city average) and only 56% feel safe outdoors after dark (relative to 67% city average).
- There is a greater representation of BAME communities in the Central Ward (30.1%) which is almost double the city average and one of the

highest in Bristol. It will be important to ensure that their voices are being heard in the conversation about the reshaping of the area.

[Your City Our Future \(2020\)](#) was a survey released during the height of the pandemic to understand issues important to citizens. The feedback cannot be deduced to individual wards but a number of broad statements can be made in relation to the experiences of equalities groups. There was all round positive feedback on the changes that had taken place, including:

- Increased levels of walking and cycling, less traffic and better air quality and the positive changes to peoples mental health.
- Flexibility with working and travel arrangements and the balance between work and leisure.
- Under the theme of inclusion and fairness, sustained funding to support vulnerable or disadvantaged groups ranked in the top third of subjects/priorities for the future in Bristol
- Actions to make streets, buildings and transport more accessible for all ranked similarly; but higher amongst the most deprived deciles.

A number of transport sub-topics were extracted from the survey and each question ranked by order of popularity (out of 81). The below screen capture illustrates the popularity of measures to create safe, inclusive places relative to car based infrastructure and management proposals.

Transport	All Respondents	All Respondents	Deprivation deciles 1 & 2	Deprivation deciles 9 & 10	Male	Female	Age 0 to 24	Age 25 or older
Everyone can travel easily around Bristol without using a car	86%	7	13	5	3	9	9	7
Less traffic in the city overall	79%	18	33	9	11	23	27	17
More space and priority for walking	78%	23	36	13	15	30	37	21
More frequent buses to more destinations	76%	33	31	31	29	34	34	33
Children will be able to play, walk and cycle outside in their neighbourhood	76%	34	32	26	26	37	38	32
More action to tackle speeding and unsafe driving	74%	37	37	29	39	36	58	35
Less traffic in residential streets	71%	42	52	30	31	44	57	40
More space and priority for cycling	68%	46	65	36	37	50	43	46
Parking and access prioritised for disabled people	61%	60	62	54	61	59	59	59
Road space removed to widen pavements and/or provide outside seating for restaurants, pubs	57%	63	70	53	57	65	68	62
A parking scheme to control how many cars park on streets in my neighbourhood	37%	77	76	74	75	77	79	76
Less parking space in the city centre	29%	79	81	79	79	79	80	79
More parking space in the city centre	19%	81	80	80	80	81	78	81
Everyone can drive when and where they want in Bristol	19%	80	78	81	81	80	81	80

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

It has been acknowledged that some of the data available and captured during the pandemic offers insights into a unique window of time. The data is also heavily quantitative based and relates to a ward profile or city-wide scale; not necessarily the lived experiences of people who associate with a Protected Characteristic who visit, live and work in the respective area.

The need to plug the knowledge gap was recognised early in the project programme as described in the following section. The gaps in knowledge could be filled by having direct contact with disability groups alongside seeking feedback directly from organisations and individuals within the Old City on their experience of the measures implemented and their thoughts on longer term proposals for permanent pedestrianisation.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

Due to the emergency timescales imposed by the pandemic, and the need to rapidly facilitate transport with safe social distancing, there was no formal public consultation in advance of implementing the temporary measures for the TTRO. However, the roadmap towards making the measures permanent, however, has required extensive engagement from late 2020.

This has been captured through ongoing feedback from representatives of relevant local equalities organisations (inc BPAC, WECIL, Bristol Walking Alliance, Bristol Older Peoples Forum) – including those with an understanding of the needs of disabled and older people in Bristol. We have recently requested a detailed accessibility audit from WECIL for the area that will complement previous auditing work undertaken for the St Nics market to help inform design proposals.

General, meetings have taken place with other key stakeholders, including discussion with organisations based in the Old City and King St, residents and visitors whilst we have gathered public feedback and continuously monitored implemented measures, including their impact upon specific protected groups. This feedback has been used to quickly and reactively modify measures, reduce the disproportionate negative impacts of changes to the public realm and parking, and maximise positive impacts for groups with protected characteristics.

Consultation will take place at a minimum as part of our statutory requirements through the Traffic Regulation Orders process. As part of this, many groups will be consulted again and further notifications of changes will be provided in the area. Extra due diligence has taken place at this early stage to offset any objections arising to the proposals during the statutory process and to ensure we can deliver an inclusive scheme.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

Designs

A reduction in both parking spaces outside shops and in local centres could affect access for disabled people to services. It could also affect access for pregnant women and older people, who are more likely to rely upon a private car to access shops and services. These conditions can have a knock

on effect on walking distances and the requirement for provision to break up journeys (seating/resting places). Providing well designed, conveniently located disabled parking within the immediate zone of influence, will be crucial.

Reduction in carriageway allocation and road closures at peak hours could reduce access and lengthen journey times for the same groups who rely on cars. Altered street configuration could create issues for disabled people's access along footways and familiarity with surroundings. We will seek to provide strict design criteria for pavement licencing to ensure that pavements remain a safe and uninterrupted space for people to use.

We are acutely aware of the challenges faced by those with visual impairments already due to the historic surface course of some sections of the Old City whilst some of the gradients can be strenuous for those with mobility issues (although no streets exceed 1 in 8 gradient for handrails/mobility aids). Wayfinding and legibility for navigating the Old City, including St Nics Market may also be challenging but is being addressed through upgrades to signage, mapping and orientation aids.

We are aware of how changes to the public realm and carriageway may be interpreted differently by the visually and hearing impaired and the implications of low noise vehicles (scooters/electric vehicles) can have on compromising the perception of safety. Furthermore, the absence of specialist support services within the immediacy of the Old City will not improve the experience of place for certain users and may even deter access to the area before a journey has commenced.

Engagement & Communication

We are also aware of the barriers to engagement in the process of consulting on the scheme if businesses, residents and visitors are digitally illiterate. Only 47.8% of people in Bristol aged 65+ say they are comfortable using digital services, compared to 81.8% overall. We need to use a range of communication channels and combine conventional engagement methods, such as telephone interviews, radio and print, with virtual platforms and interactive tools, such as online interactive maps and surveys, to reach a representative audience. This is particularly true of engaging with market traders during any consultation activity.

It is vital that all communications are in plain English and that Easy Read versions are available (or on request if appropriate). People who do not speak English as a main language will require local updates and information in plain English, and alternative languages/formats to address the risk of misinformation being spread e.g. through social media. This is being met through the location, language and design of tangible communications within the public realm.

Black and Minority Ethnic-led small businesses may lack information about the support available to them from the government particularly taxi drivers, restaurants, cafes and hotels. Equally, those from more deprived parts of the city may not necessarily be engaged in the scheme or feel they can contribute in a meaningful way on balance. The Central Ward also has a transient, youthful community so a diverse range of communication techniques will be necessary to engage with such groups.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

A key element of our ongoing discussions with local stakeholders and representative groups, is the need to continue providing disabled access throughout Old City and King St and to actively encourage people to visit and spend time in the area as a resident, worker or tourist. This can be achieved by adopted a multifaceted, holistic approach towards improving 'access' and the 'experience of place' that goes beyond providing physical provision.

Throughout the project, we have been proactive in prioritising access for those with limited mobility and/or vision and modifying the scheme in response to ongoing feedback from representatives. Specific feedback has been provided about the need to keep pavements clear for visually impaired and wheelchair users, and this is being applied in terms of granting permission for tables and chairs outside venues as part of the hospitality recovery. Ongoing enforcement has also been key to ensuring there is not creep in terms of obstacles such as tables, chairs & A-Boards.

We have liaised internally to help design plans for additional disabled parking bays (advisory and permanent) to be incorporated into the TTRO and TRO respectively after recognising the challenge people have in accessing the centre of Bristol in the short term. This is especially true going forward with changes to the local road network and future changes to disabled parking provision both on and off street around the Old City (including closure of The Galleries for redevelopment).

We have raised the need to retain and secure parking compounds as part of new developments, including Mary Le Port and to formalise advisory bays on the High Street but have acknowledged the challenging spatial constraints that have made providing additional provision to the west of the Old City more difficult to achieve short term. Nonetheless, disabled permit holders are added to a white list to access the Old City via Baldwin Street Bus Gate and can park for a three-hour period of double yellow lines.

From an engagement and consultation perspective, we are proactively using inclusive, non-online methods of communication to ensure the widest possible group of people can benefit from information as well as the consultation and feedback process. This will be reflected in a consultation material and the production of hard copy, attractive and legible brochures detailing the proposal for distribution. This will form part of a doorstop engagement process in summer 2021.

The trade off from limiting vehicle access to the Old City and the inconvenience this may bring to protected characteristic groups, is the positive health and access outcomes of providing a safer, inclusive and welcoming public realm and civic space where all audiences can thrive in the absence of vehicles using the streets. The scheme will reduce help re-mode and re-time vehicle journeys to the area and encourage people to re-think the use of the car; all of which will help reduce air pollution and enable further space to be reallocated to walking, cycling and scooting.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

The temporary scheme currently in play, has improved the safety of shopping through social-distancing measures over 2020/2021. This has ultimately provided health benefits for those protected groups who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. However, moving forwards and transitioning to a permanent scheme, our holistic approach to supporting access and travel seeks to improve physical infrastructure and top up the local service offer for people visiting and living in the area.

The existing situation for wheelchair users in the Old City is particularly difficult, with narrow footpaths and uneven surfaces. Pedestrianised streets will provide opportunity for wheelchair users to safely use the road as an alternative if desired. This activity is already happening due to obstacles on

footpaths, leading to the mixing of vehicles, wheelchairs, buggies and pedestrians in a small contested space.

Low-car or zero-car streets also make crossing the road far easier for those who are less mobile or with hearing and visual impairments. By creating better and safer active-travel alternatives to private car travel for lower-income groups and elderly persons, positive financial impacts will be realised for these groups.

Negative health impacts from air pollution also disproportionately affect young and elderly persons, lower-income groups, Black and Minority Ethnic populations, and pregnant and nursing women. Measures to re-allocate carriageway space to active travel and away from cars will reduce air pollution and benefit these groups.

Our aim is to provide an extended Shopmobility service with a satellite facility (drop off/collect) based out of St Nics Market to provide protected characteristic groups with mobility aids and information to enhance their experience of place. This proposal dovetails investment being made by the markets team to enhance signage and wayfinding and create a more inclusive Old City.

Whilst we recognise that providing disabled parking provision towards the west of the Old City is required, our approach seeks to promote and support alternative transport arrangements, namely Community Transport, to provide door to door journeys. The Old City is well served by bus stops and taxi bays which can be used by accessible vehicles and will provide more direct access to the area than by using private vehicles.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

Other parts of Bristol Streetspace that have similar aims – such as the pedestrianisation of King St will have a combined cumulative effect on improvements to air quality. The pedestrianisation of the Old City and King Street are taking place concurrently with the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and the emergence of cycle logistics and freight consolidation; all of which will mitigate the impact of air quality issues on deprived communities across the city (who are disproportionately impacted)

Our plans to support public realm improvements through several 'focal point' designs, will pivot around the organic changes taking place in the Old City (outdoor seating/planters etc) with the aim of creating inclusive areas with seating, a good surface course and legible signage. These designs are also focused around key gateways and help improve permeability and connectivity through the area for all audiences whilst encouraging play.

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

On an overall Streetspace level, the EqIA process has helped us to identify potential impacts in the areas of the city where we will be implementing measures, and the need for planned monitoring and subsequent adjustment of measures in line with feedback from equalities stakeholders and citizens.

More specifically, the EqIA process has informed our ongoing need for improved provision for disabled users within and around the Old City and King St and the key need to present information in ways less-online people can access. This continues to be especially pertinent as we enter the statutory process of formalising a TRO and developing public realm designs.

Based on the assessment and feedback, we have increased and amended the location of disabled parking locations on the periphery of the scheme and increased the number of seating/resting places. In addition, we are ensuring via engagement with the hospitality sector that pavements are kept clear as far as possible.

An advisory disabled bay has been installed on Queen Charlotte Street (close to the Old Vic theatre) and a further bay in this area will be included as part of permanent proposals. Five new advisory disabled bays are being installed around the Old City perimeter, with 4 on High Street and 1 on Bridge Street. Further advisory bays have been drawn up for inclusion on Broad Street (3 in total) and Baldwin Street (2 in total) although the deadline to change the

COVID TTRO has passed and the process itself takes 12 weeks to complete based on current lead times. With the exception of the bays on Baldwin Street, which are still under consideration (as it falls within the Bristol Bridge TRO), these have been earmarked for inclusion in the permanent TRO.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

Need to continue having oversight of pavement licence applications and locations to provide scrutiny of access arrangements. An interactive map was proposed to help track and monitor this process whilst a consistent design guide would be appropriate to ensure arrangements don't present a barrier to movement/risk to safety.

Continue pursuing design-specific feedback on access for persons with limited vision and/or mobility will now take place with this representative group to inform elements of implementation such as temporary tactile markings, ramps, and resting places. This feedback will be implemented where possible in new and existing sites with access audits due to be conducted 1 May/June 2021 by WECIL.

Inviting further feedback and onsite assessment from stakeholders such as BPAC and ensure we keep reviewing and improving. Stakeholders such as Newminster House provide useful eyes on the street whilst the temporary scheme morphs into something more permanent.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

Through built in monitoring. Methods not yet final but will include smart survey equipment to monitor social distancing outcomes, and a planned feedback website. Air pollution impacts will be measured through existing testing infrastructure across city on a site-by-site basis.

Strong continuous feedback mechanisms have been put in place with organisations within the Old City to enable the impact to be measured and improvement and mitigation efforts to occur as soon as possible. A business survey, due to be launched in summer 2021, will also help to capture the views of people using the area on their experiences of pedestrianisation and the improvements that could be offered through a permanent scheme.

Service Director Sign-Off: <i>J.P. Smith</i>	Equalities Officer Sign Off: Stephanie Champion
Date: 24.5.2022	Date: